

IN GOD'S COUNTRY
Catholic Stories of Home and Abroad

NEIL BOYTON, S.J.



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IN GOD'S COUNTRY

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CATHOLIC STORIES OF HOME AND ABROAD

BY

NEIL BOYTON, S.J.

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To
AUNT POLLY

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Part I

IN GOD'S COUNTRY

THE DREAM MOTHER

THE new mother rose above her weakness to whisper hungrily: "Let me—let me see him." But she had to wait while the bit of red rubber was being bathed and weighed. And when finally the tiny bundle, fresh as a rosebud, was laid in her longing arms, she had barely strength enough to beg: "Sister Immaculata, name him for his father, but let his other name be Mary. Aw, Sister, it's hard to go, knowing—" She broke off into an agonizing prayer, "O, most loving Mother Mary, shield him, or take him. You must."

Sister, who knew of the mixed marriage, lifted the sleeping baby, and, holding him once to his mother's lips, carried him out of the ward.

* * * * *

Otis Mary Scott was an imaginative, unkempt urchin of eight when the woman he had always called "Mommer" snapped the truth at him. In fact, that day the floodgates of her pent-up jealousy burst and she told him more, and though

he could not understand all the bitter words that poured out, he did grasp two crimes that his real mother had been guilty of—she had been pretty, and she had been a “Rumancat’lic.” Child as he was, he sensed that these were offenses that the inflamed woman across the smoky kitchen could never, never forgive.

Besides this silent boy, her Rip Van Winkle husband had brought her little all the years but a persistent knack of losing jobs. But when the Great War came, and its hungry demand for shells, shells, and yet more shells, gave work to the incompetent even, it really seemed that her “man” had downed his habit.

This appeared to be confirmed the night he came home from Du Pont City and rather shamefacedly confessed to the raise he had received that week. But three days later one of those mysterious explosions occurred at the plant, and when they told her that funeral expenses would be unnecessary, the widow thanked God; for all she had to face the world with was thirty-eight dollars and five small children—the tallest of them not her own.

Before the thirty-eight dollars had dwindled into that many cents, Uncle Jim appeared, fairy-godfatherlike, and offered to set her up in business. So they bought out a tiny candy store that nestled in the shadow of a stately public school. A fat Jewish family, and many relatives, occupied all upstairs, and the Scotts squeezed into a dry-goods-box room, which as regular as the clock went round, was dormitory, living-room, kitchen, dining-room, and dormitory again.

Before the swinging door, was an atmosphere of cheap baseballs, jacks, chewing gum in jars, striped candy, pencils, patriotic-covered pads, and lurid, fly-specked paper series. And it was from the meager profit reaped here—and a little neighborhood washing—that the widow fed and patched six.

But the times scowled at tiny candy stores, and the gaunt gray wolf crept bolder and bolder toward the swinging door. More washing was taken in, and Otis, on the plea of having a heavy cold, was kept home from school to tend the counter.

Then a horrible afternoon came, when “Mommer,” with a big basket of washing in her arms, appeared all unexpectedly at the shop door, and caught the famished Otis actually eating stock!

She did not whip him—he had expected that—but she did something that sent a thrill of cold terror through him. She left the wicker basket there in the doorway—so that the little girl who came in for “two cents’ worth of them” had to skip over it—and disappeared into the back room. When the girl had gone, “Mommer” stood suddenly by the shop door and she held his dirty bluish overcoat and cap in her hand.

“Put ’em on.” She spoke as low as though she were afraid of disturbing a sick child. “If you’re old enough to steal an honest woman’s bread, Otis Scott, you’re old enough to earn your own.”

And as a final fling, as he stood silent and open-mouthed, with his hands on the sticky knob, “Let that Mary of yours protect you. I heard tell your

pansy-faced mother prayed that. Out with you, Otis Mary Scott."

The boy stumbled over the basket of soiled linen, and was out into the murky city.

He would not be nine till May.

It was evening when he crept back and flattened his nose against the show window. "Mommer," with Luther, the baby, held casually over her free arm, was weighing out a nickel's worth of peppermints for a small boy. Her metallic voice was telling the purchaser to leave that mitt severely alone, unless his intentions were serious.

Otis had not the courage to push wide the half-open door, and he sank back into the deepening night. With a deadly fear of being arrested if he stopped, he kept walking.

Later the streets grew lonesomer, shadows more fearful; a church bell, high up in the blackness of a neighboring tower, boomed eleven, and still his tired legs carried him westward. Once, under the hard white glare of a street corner ahead, he saw the figure of a big man and caught the gleam of his buttons, and his heart did not settle back till he was swallowed up in the welcome obscurity of a narrow alley.

It was still fearsomely dark when he arrived at Uncle Jim's. Three hostile black windows and a black doorway looked hostilely down on him, but he was too leg-weary even to mind their displeasure, and he dropped like a bomb on the upper of the two cold steps.

It was huddling there that he dreamt the dream for the first time. And this was what he dreamt:

Someone robed in faint blue and dim white was stooping near, and her very presence brought him warmth and that sweet sense of protection. He was striving, striving to look up into the face of this nice someone and tell her he wanted to go home.

Then it was raw morning, and Uncle Jim, his dented dinner pail still on his arm, was bending over him and shaking him, saying: "Otis! Why, darn my socks, it's little Otis!"

His aunt appeared, her hair straggling over the shoulders of a shabby pink kimono, and both of them were leading him into the yellow gleam of a kitchen.

He told them, the sleep hanging heavy upon him; but they laughed harshly, and said of course not, he was just a little goose of a runaway.

But Uncle Jim heard a distant whistle and he swore, and told his wife hurriedly to put the kid to bed and he would see "Otis's widow."

That night, when Uncle Jim got home late, he looked angry and called his wife aside. Aunt Martha's voice rose angrily after a few moments, and Otis, sitting by the kitchen window with "Punky" purring in his lap, heard her say:

"That woman's not going to dump him on us. After all you done, too!"

And once Uncle Jim distinctly said: "Martha, it's a d—n shame."

The following morning Aunt Martha gave the boy a potato sack and sent him out to pick coal from the neighboring tracks.

A forenoon came; Otis was washed thoroughly; and Auntie, dressed in her faded best, took him

to an immense park-like place and into a high granite building.

Otis found himself, like all the other little boys, standing bashfully in a great warm room, a blanket about him, and in came brisk doctors. Each doctor examined him, and asked many questions; most of them Aunt Martha answered eagerly.

After they reached home she gave Otis money to buy the "skatamobile" that he had long coveted in the show window of the corner store.

When Uncle Jim arrived Aunt Martha nodded to him, and he did not once tell Otis to kick that white cat out the door. So the boy and the disreputable "Punky" had a glorious time up till bedtime.

And that night again his dream came. Again the dim fair presence seemed close by, satisfying him, like the scent of rare perfume. He tried so hard to look up into the face, which he knew must be surpassingly fair, that he found himself awake and crying for very joy. He heard against the window pane the patter, patter of rain.

All morning it rained, as spring rains do, and in the middle of the miserable afternoon Auntie made Otis dress in a brand-new blue suit. When he was done she produced a smooth white tie that made him clap his hands.

They took the trolley and were back again in the parklike place. Other boys of his own size, shy and silent and in new suits, were there too.

There appeared a stout young person in cool white, and her questions gushed so rapidly that even Aunt Martha's answers seemed hardly to

make a break in that flow. Otis had never heard anybody talk so continuously, even "Mommer" when she was angry, and he watched her incessant lips solemnly, wondering how she could do it.

Finally Auntie rose and, saying, "Otis must be a good little boy to Miss Kenneth," she did a most unexpected thing. She actually bent over—his arm flew up wardingly—and her lips brushed his cheek.

Then she moved serenely away in the van of the other women, and Otis, who got up to follow, found his shoulder held and himself listening to the unintelligible stream of words that the governess was pouring impartially over all the crying little boys.

That night, after the tasteless, gulped supper, and stretched down between the comfy sheets, with the blue counterpane pulled close up over his ear, Otis drifted off; and it was so exceedingly pleasant to lie there that it was even unnecessary to try and see the face that he knew watched above him.

He waited politely several days, expecting Aunt Martha, or possibly "Mommer" even, would come and take him home, but they never did; and one afternoon, when Miss Kenneth walked unsuspectingly into the deserted classroom, she discovered Otis and, being motherwise, folded the lonely lad to her ample bosom. There she learnt what she already knew.

But she told him only babies and little girls did that. He was to be brave and learn many things, for he would live at Langdon Home till

he was eighteen and a big man. Then she asked him his full name.

"Mary!" she laughed, "stop, thief! Why, that's my name! How did you ever come to get it, boy?"

"I dunno. But, please, ma'am, some 'un gave it to me when I was a little kid."

"Well, Mr. Mary, I think I'll call you 'China' hereafter. With your blue eyes and your white skin you look like a rare bit of Peking porcelain. So, see here, China—out on the playgrounds you trot, and don't you ever dare to cry again, or you'll surely crack."

And out to the noisy playgrounds he went, where an older boy called: "Trying to crow with your govie, weren't you? I bet two bits she kissed yer." But he indignantly denied the truth.

Still, he secretly liked his governess all the better, now that he knew they had a name in common.

He struck up quick friendships on the big playgrounds. He raced. He wrestled. He tagged his neighbor and was tagged in turn. He batted hard and he fielded wretchedly. He shouted in the clear high-pitched voice that carried even above his companions' trebles. Wordy disputes arose over nothings and were settled there and then with tight little fists. And soon China—for his "govie" had called him that once in public and he was labeled for life—China was living the whole life of the Home, and "Mommer," Auntie, Uncle Jim, and even "Punky," had become blunted memories.

But back of all were the nights; for as soon as

he pulled up the blue counterpane and straightened his legs into the white sheets and the lights were low, his dream might come.

After a while he learnt to look forward to Saturday nights especially, for invariably on those nights she who was mother came in all her fairness. And even if he could never see into her face, her very nearness was comfort and satisfying and home.

One Saturday afternoon, when they stood alone near the semideserted playgrounds, for it was an "outing day," he tried timidly to tell his governess who would surely come with the dark. But she laughed loud, saying: "Nonsense! What a great big silly my China is!" And he kept quiet, puzzled that Miss Kenneth, whom he liked almost as much as he had "Punky," did not understand. But he never tried to tell anyone else.

So twinkled by three years at the Home. Good regular food had filled out his limbs, merging angles into plump curves, and visitors would look twice at Otis Scott.

In school, lessons were attractive, and his eager little brain gulped in a surprising amount of knowledge-and much misinformation.

In the chapel, where the movies were shown regularly, occasionally he heard something of a man called "God."

With the terms he had been promoted, till now he was in a section that had a man for a prefect, and he could gain, for classwork and good conduct, "degrees," which gave him permission on holidays to go beyond the stone walls of the Home.

The same older boy who had once called to him in the first days, was in another section, but he met Otis one evening, the night before an outing Saturday, and asked him to come to the movies tomorrow.

Otis, to whom an outing day meant miles of aimless walking, was on the point of declining, for movies downtown are not free; but the older boy said, smiling: "Oh, I'll pay all that, China."

So Otis said "Sure," and raced away. The older boy watched him across the playground.

That night, in the dim of the dormitory, his dream came vividly. So vividly that early next morning it seemed the counterpane was become her blue cape, and in some nice sleepy way the white sheets were her encircling arms folded close about him, as though she were an anxious mother fearing threatening evil for her child. He deliberately kept his eyes closed to try and hold the sweet sensation of utter safety those shielding arms gave him.

Afar he heard the ambulance of St. Mary's Hospital go gonging down "The Ridge," and later rang the bells of the big church, a square away from the Home, and he wondered, between asleep and awake, why this was so, as today was not Sunday—or was it? But dressing, he remembered it was December eighth, an outing Saturday, and he had an unused "degree," and he hoped the older boy would keep his promise.

The older boy did. In fact, he sought for Otis right after breakfast. They walked slowly down Broad till the broad-rimmed hat on "Billy" Penn, atop the City Hall, was almost overhead.

Then they loitered, whistling to the fluttering pigeons in the Square, and after that wormed through a crowd before a bird store and stood a long while watching the antics of a windowful of gray apes, "fresh from India," as the placard stated. The older boy waited while Otis went in and gravely priced a mischievous baby monkey that seemed to have bilocation and a sense of humor combined.

Regretfully they pushed themselves out of that crowd and entered holly-hung department stores. In each they visited two departments—the athletic goods and there where the red and white Santa Claus reigned. And in both of these departments they met and greeted other Home boys.

After the toys came a stop at a marble font, Otis ordering his favorite strawberry ice-cream soda—and the older boy paid for both.

Then The Imperial had opened her mirrored doors, and they were sitting erect in "two-bit" seats, watching the world of deeds that flickered by. Otis sat round-mouthed when woolly-trousered cowboys raced up the dusty ribbon of a road or white cotton' shrapnel clouds burst over the jagged lines of trenches, but the older boy always leaned forward when there flashed on the screen a scene that Otis thought stupid, of an apartment or a garden nook.

Finally they came blinking out into the sunshine—the two lines of Christmas shoppers that overflowed Market Street looking unnatural to them at first—and they made a dinner of an-

other soda. Strawberry ice cream again for Otis.

Afterward they strolled up Broad, and the older boy suggested they should spend the afternoon in the suburbs, where there was a tiny stream—maybe they could catch some turtles—and a woods.

Otis readily cried "Peachy."

They turned in the middle of the Square to cross Broad and get the Manayunk car. Otis was laughing up into the smiling face of the older boy and imitating an antic of Charlie Chaplin that they had just seen at The Imperial, when someone from the curb shouted. The older boy jumped.

Otis over his shoulder had one awful vision of a big blue automobile directly behind and the chalk face of the fur-coated chauffeur.

Then out of great black depths he was struggling, struggling to the surface, and at a great distance, yet near his head, a gong kept clanging. More pitchy blackness. More struggles to the light. A wonderful display of fireworks—reds and greens and shooting golds. Then suddenly, like turning a corner, agonizing pain, and people conversing over him.

A sharp voice was commanding: "Try phoning the Home, please. The number on this coat is 317K."

Someone whispered. Then, "If you think so, Sister, better call the chaplain at once."

Then firm hands were cutting away his clothes where the fires of pain blazed, and Otis heard

deep moaning; and after an age, he knew that he caused it.

More firm hands lifted him onto something hard, which wheeled away, and it seemed to him he was going up in the elevator to see the toy department again.

Then he knew he was where there was strong light, and the sharp voice spoke: "Well, Sister Immaculata, any 'dope'?"

And another voice, a gentle one, said:

"Yes; a Home boy. The name is Scott."

Otis opened his eyes to see a white-tiled ceiling. Then an immense white headpiece sailed between him and a part of the ceiling, and a hand was searching at his throat.

The quiet voice was saying to someone: "There is no medal, no mark, but I feel sure, Father."

A face, clean-shaven, bent over saying: "Think. What's your full name, my boy?"

It took him a month to think. Finally he heard a whispered "Otis-Mary-Scott," and after a week he realized he had been talking.

The quiet voice again: "Otis *Mary* Scott! What!" And the great white headpiece completely shut out the tiled ceiling.

Then, "Father, I do believe it's Nellie Scott's child. He'd be about this age, and those were the names she insisted on you giving him. Sure, and it's no wonder, no medal—at that Home. But quickly, Father, anoint."

"Just a moment, Doctor."

But for Otis the awful pain was fading, same as the tiled ceiling and the distant murmuring

voices and the faint touch of hands. Someone was standing between all those things. Someone robed in the blue of an August sky was bending low and her white arms were not shielding any more but outstretched.

As had been his dream custom all the years, Otis Mary Scott struggled to look up; and this time, though his eyes were closed tight, he began to see clearly the wonderful, welcoming face.

GOLDEN AUTUMN

THEY appeared a couple of Babes in the Woods, standing there within the shelter of the sanctuary. She in white looked the slip of a girl. Yet to more than one of the assembled guests, as she repeated after Father Bailey the binding phrases—"from this day forth," "for better," "in sickness"—it seemed as though she were robbing the cradle.

Plighting their troth there before the Tabernacle, each felt something of the sacredness of the sacrament pass into their souls, but one, with womanly intuition, sensed this more vividly than the other and her eyes were grave.

As they were leaving Holy Family Church, she had wept as is the way with brides the world over, and he had laughed boyishly when she had confessed—"because I am so h-h-happy, Jim."

Thus, not unlike spring weather, they began together their new uncertain life.

* * * * *

Jim still slept the deep sleep of youth, but Mother was busily awake, and her thoughts played over this dawning day of days.

It was a luxury to lie there, gaze fixed on the ceiling, and just stroll along the many by-paths of memory that the day brought.

They were vagrant memories, jumbled out of their time sequence—will Henry and his family arrive at the church in time? Father Ed said seven-thirty for the Mass would be a more convenient hour for Old Monsignor. Did he phone that new time to Henry last evening? Last evening the telegram came about Katie Leland. So she is dead in California! Poor tired soul, God rest her! She was the last of our wedding guests. Her own marriage to Pat Leland did not bring her much happiness. Katie wore that white cameo that was her mother's, last time I saw her in St. Louis. That was the year of the Exposition—'04 or '05—and this is—My, how the years gather! Should Jim wear the white tie or his old one? Yes; I put the new white one out. . . .

Mother turned her eyes and gazed inquiringly toward the dresser. The oval mirrors reflected the foot of the bed, a mountain ridge of clothes, the comb and silver-backed brushes, and Jim's new white tie. Yes; she had.

Mother's view took in parts of the familiar room: every article a gateway to the past, an awakener of memories. She saw the gilt and red plush framed circles of her father's and mother's daguerreotypes. She recalled that time they were taken in Chicago, when a little girl, she had come up from Ottawa to view Lincoln's body lying in solemn state in the black draped City Hall.... My William is growing to look like his grandfather. The crow's feet around the eyes and the same whimsical set to his lips, thought Mother, but he has Jim's ears. No; he does not look like Abe Lincoln!

Mother's glance shifted, and into view swam the faded white wreath and the faded photograph of a baby face, sweetly grave, in its satin coffin. The eyes of the old woman softened and the eternal mother-lights glowed there.

"My blessed Ann, happy these many, many years," prayed Mother, and she found herself looking up at the red-robed statue, on which flickered shadows from the faithful lamp, burning continuously at its base. It suddenly came to Mother that the face of the statue and the face of her long dead baby had a calmness in common—nay, rather, a triumph of peace was impressed on each still countenance. The unruffled aspect of those who have been victorious.

"My little one is safe with You, dear Heart," murmured Mother. She felt very happy despite the tears and the void that again filled her empty arm. The others had each grown out of babyhood, but Ann—Ann had never slept elsewhere. She had remained the soft babe, and many a night Mother dreamed the pleasant dream that her little one had returned to sleep at her side....

Afterward, there came to Mother's attention the sight of the partly closed door of the walnut wardrobe, revealing the black silk dress with the genuine embroidery and the heirloom lace, that her daughter-in-law had carefully hung there last evening in anticipation of the day's festivities. This sight brought Mother out of her memories and into the realities of the present.

So the day had come—ran the refrain through Mother's mind—after the ups and downs of all these years!

Mother turned her head to survey her octogenarian partner, sleeping the untroubled sleep of his grandchildren, and she thought of Jim's declaration, made half a century ago: "Mother, you'll have to do the worrying for this concern. I haven't the time nor the inclination." Jim, despite his snowy locks and weather-beaten cheeks, still kept the heart of a boy; a very young boy. And Mother smiled indulgently at her yokemate. He had always seemed her eldest boy, had Jim. Sometimes, Mother considered she had gone through life as a widow with an extra son, and this Jim was that boy.

Then the demands of the day came back imperatively and Mother moved about, dressing quietly for fear of wakening Jim before the last moment. "He'll need his rest. He's beginning to tire easily."

When the soft toned ship-clock, that Uncle Felix, home from a China voyage, had brought them on their silver wedding anniversary, struck five bells, Mother called gently, as though she was wakening one of the children for school.

"Jim. Jim, it's six-thirty and Father Ed's Mass will start in an hour, dear."

Jim uttered a startled: "What's that, Mother?"

Then he was awake and, for once, Jim, who never remembered birthdays or anniversaries, remembered this date. He caught her hand and drew her down, down till the two white-haired heads met.

"This is one anniversary, I didn't forget, did

I, Mother?" He asked this boyishly, as if it was quite an accomplishment.

Mother patted his head extravagantly.

"Well, I stuck it out with you for fifty—" exclaimed Jim.

"The idea! So did I! Hush, and say your morning prayers."

She held him up for a final examination, the same way she would have inspected any of her children years ago on Sunday mornings before their start for the Children's Mass.

She discovered a truant snowy lock and brushed it into place.

"Did Father Ed tell you Katie Leland is dead in California?" asked Mother suddenly. "He received a telegram last evening from the Sisters at the Hospital."

"Who's she?"

"Katie Morgan, who married Patrick Leland. Why, Jim, she was my bridesmaid!"

"Oh, that old one!" exclaimed Jim, "She's better off."

"Yes," finished Mother; "Kate is. He gave her trouble. She was very lonely."

Mother gave his white tie an affectionate twist into place.

"Come," she announced, "you're ready. I hear Willie with the car."

William's wife was waiting for them at the foot of the stairs, tiny Kevin at her knee, but Jack and Jane brushed past their mother and rushed forward to cling to their grandparents' hands and shout: "Grandma. Grandpa Jim. Happy anner-versary! Happy anner-versary!"

And the most plebeian-looking "Goulash" almost loosened his tail wagging "many more of them" to Jim. Mother he politely ignored. As Jack put it, "See, Mom, old Goulie is a man's dog. He likes only me and Grandpa Jim."

But Jane snuggled into her grandmother's arms and consoled: "Never you mind, Grannie. I think 'Goulash' is perfectly horrid. Dogs are like boys, they aren't polite." The old woman had a fleeting thought that this slim grandchild was Ann come back to life again.

They poured out the front door and all piled into the machine. Then there was an impatient wait, while Jane tore back to get her prayer-book. And there was a further delay, when Jane triumphantly discovered "Goulash" wedged between Jim and his grandson. Unwilling Jack bore "the man's dog," a sad brown bundle of protest, to the dungeons of the family cellar.

At Holy Family's grouped on the church steps were Henry, his wife, and more bare-kneed grandchildren. Mother took Jim's arm and clung to it a little bewildered in the midst of all the flood of greetings and congratulations that fell about them.

Through the crowd strode Father Ed, and he threw an arm around his parents and drawing their heads close together, whispered:

"I do not need to tell you two dear ones, for whom my Mass will be offered in a few minutes. I would be an ingrate son, indeed, if I gave it to any other this golden morning. But I must hurry in to vest. You know what a stickler Old Monsignor is for punctuality. 'Bye.'"

Father Ed picked out Jack and Henry's Victor and ordered them into the sacristy, or, he threatened, unrubrical as it was, Jane and her cousin Rita might have to serve. The mention of the threat was sufficient.

Mother, leaning on Jim's arm and walking with the solemn deliberativeness of the aged, led the little procession up the aisle.

Up this same aisle half a century ago had marched the youthful Jim and his bride-elect, and of all who crowded the pews that distant morning, these two alone survived. That forgotten congregation had heard the wedding peals of the organ hold a promise in their glad volume. Now from the sonorous organ loft rolled down the stately sounds that proclaimed to the ears of Mother and Jim and their descendants the triumph of a Te Deum.

Something of the exultation of the Jubilee morning had taken possession of Mother and Jim. Yet despite its realization, as eagerly as any of their open-mouthed grandchildren, they watched the sanctuary door. Jim nudged Mother and said eagerly, "Here they come!"

And they saw their grandsons, Jack and Victor, reverently dignified to the full extent of their four foot height, appear and Father Ed, in white and gold vestments come forth, escorted by Old Monsignor.

The Mass of their Golden Anniversary began.

Mother noticed Jim take out his rosary, and the beads started to slip one by one through his fingers. She never had been able to get him to take a prayer-book to church. So in her age-long

protest she opened her venerable book, but her eyes would wander from the page. She could not keep them devoutly on her book, when her Father Ed said Mass.

She watched this youngest son go up the steps and stoop, to kiss the altar, and her memories flew back to holy glimpses of other days in this old parish church. The long forgotten Benediction Service, when Ed, smaller than his nephews, Jack or Victor, had made his first appearance in this sanctuary. With what loving hands had she sewed his bright red cassock! The many mornings the growing altar boy had served Old Monsignor's Mass and she had prayed the secret desire of her heart as she watched the boy come and go. But all these old memories were blotted out in the recollection of the vivid day, a decade ago, when with a proud Jim at her side, she had witnessed his First Home Mass, that morning after his return from student days in Eternal Rome.

Heaven and the whole Heavenly Court had been very near that morning, when she and Jim had first experienced the hallowed joy of seeing one of their own, a priest forever.

Her Father Ed looked so youthful and energetic, such a power for good and God, that Mother forgot her attempts at her prayer-book and caught herself repeating an old favorite bit of verse,

“My son to Thy Son, Mary, Master and servitor,
My son to Thy Son, Mary, linked forevermore.”

Jim turned to her and asked: “What’s that you say, Mother?”

But she reproved him, raising her hand warningly to her lips. And Jim obediently was silent.

Little Victor rang the bell vigorously and Jim and Mother half knelt. William, kneeling with his wife and children in the next pew, got up and going into the Jubilarians' pew assisted them to kneel. Again Victor shook the bell warningly and Jim bent his head, but Mother looked straight at the altar. She could not bow her head when Father Ed held Our Lord.

She saw her priest bend over the corporal, then genuflect, lift the Lord on high, and sink down in adoration again. Holding the chalice of His Blood, he did the same, and Mother's eyes filled with easy tears, till Father Ed appeared a golden and white blur and vague with the glory of candle light and immaculate altar linen.

To Mother faith was close akin to vision, and it was easy to imagine the sanctuary overflowing with a bright host of veiled wings and familiar souls . . . the dear innumerable dead, or, rather, the glorious living, who had but preceded her and Jim Home. . . . Father and Mother, baby Ann, Francie, the other Eddie . . . all the loved ones, the harvesting years brought nearer and nearer, closer and closer.

And there came to her poignantly joyful the consoling realization that comes to all parents of priests. The realization that disarms death and robs Purgatory. The knowledge they have an intercessor of their own flesh and blood, who, while he lives, will offer daily propitiation.

Somehow, as he always did, Jim understood Mother's thoughts, and he reached his withered

hand and found and pressed hers. Mother's eyes again overflowed and she prayed for Father Ed, "Bless his labors with abundant fruit, and may they to whom he has ministered be here below his joy and consolation, and in heaven his beautiful and everlasting crown."

But heaven was to seem nearer to Mother and Jim.

Again Victor shook his tiny bell savagely and he and his cousin, Jack, bent reverently to recite, "*Confiteor Deo omnipotenti. . . .*"

Then William helped his father, and Henry put his strong arm under Mother's, and thus escorted by their men sons, the two approached the rails.

Father Ed came down the steps, carrying the Master of Life in his dear hands, and grave Jack walked at his side. Father Ed hesitated a moment, as though he were deciding a question of precedence. But he saw Jim nod toward Mother, so he first gave Holy Communion to her that golden morning.

Neither Jim nor Mother made much of a formal Thanksgiving and yet in the sight of the angels of the sanctuary they made a wonderful one. Was not the priest and his servers, and the congregation, their thanksgiving to the God they had served these fifty years! Were not they seeing their children and their children's children in this year of Jubilee loyal to the Lord, Who had blessed fruitfully their long union!

Later, a more tangible blessing surrounded the pair as the organ played them down the aisle and the morning sun, with rare timeliness, broke in

molten floods through the yellow stained-glass windows and enveloped the faithful Mother and Jim. In the golden aisle, the lines of age fell away and it was no longer an old man and an old woman who resembled each other; it was a groom and his bride who walked out of the House of God, with God's benediction visibly upon them.

At ten, William came around with the car and Mother and Jim got in, for Mother had demanded at the breakfast table to see "all our children to-day."

So, first, William motored them to the green quietness of St. Paul's Cemetery and Mother whispered to William, "Son, let us go to their graves alone to-day, just Jim and I."

The old couple walked to the familiar plot, and its plain granite cross, in whose friendly shadow they both knew within a few years they would sleep their long sleep, seemed to welcome their coming.

There, under the three green mounds, lay the other children. Mother had never had any fears for Baby Ann, the family angel, who had flown back to God while yet she lisped.

But under the next mound was Francie, the wilful lad. He who had wrung many an anguished prayer from his parents' hearts. His handsome face and headstrong ways had made them suffer and fear for the future. Yet, the good God, Mother recalled standing there by the graveside, had mercifully called Francie beyond the lure of temptation.

Again, Mother remembered the afternoon almost thirty years before, when she had opened

the door and there was Jim, home hours ahead of his accustomed time, and with him stood Father Bailey. Jim's face was pale, and with sudden mother-intuition, she had cried, "Jim, what's wrong? It's Francie!"

And, as in all crises, she had turned to him for strength. He had taken her into his arms and spoken quietly, "Yes, Mother, it's Francie. There has been an accident at his school."

Mother trembled again at the remembrances of the agonies of that moment and the dread of her husband's next words.

Jim had gone on, "But, thank God, Father Bailey here heard his confession and anointed him—and, Mother, be brave now, they are to bring our Francie home within the hour."

Mother repeated the fervent "His Will be done!" she had uttered that sad afternoon. Again, she re-experienced the rush of the sea of gratitude that broke over her heart. For the Sacred Heart had heard her constant prayer, "Take him rather than he stray from Thee!"

Somehow now Jim read Mother's thoughts, for he took her old hand and said:

"Mother, Francie's going Home taught me to say my beads. All our prayers could not have been in vain.

"Francie would have been forty-five or forty-six now, wouldn't he? God knows best. I like to remember him as the boy, don't you, Mother? He resembled you. He was the handsomest of the children. Well, Mother—" Jim looked down at the three grass-grown mounds and then beyond, where two other mounds would rise, and con-

tinued: "You know, Mother, as eternity comes it seems to me that our homecoming is going to be mighty pleasant. We'll but leave William and Henry and Margaret Mary and Father Ed for a while to meet Ann and Francie and the other Eddie."

"And many, many more, Jim," added Mother.

"Yes," corrected Jim, "afterward."

In peace they walked the few steps to the last mound. Here lay their firstborn, the other Eddie.

Eddie, who had come to them on the first anniversary of their wedding and who would have been forty-nine this morning. Oh! the plans and hopes they had dreamt for Eddie! And their eldest himself had dreamt higher dreams. He had been a quiet imaginative boy, whose brown eyes had reflected the sacredness of the sanctuary and for whom priestly things had held a fascination even before, a curly-polled midget, he was "on the altar" at Holy Family's.

Mother recalled: "Do you remember the night of his graduation from college when we walked home with Eddie? How proud you were. He was an inch taller than you, Jim, and he looked down as he told us it was the seminary for him in September. Do you remember that, Jim?"

"Of course, I do, Mother. But in August we laid him here. It was a bitter day, that Eve of the Assumption."

"And yet," added Mother, "looking back, God took but to give, for didn't He send us the other one in December, and he's Father Ed now. Have you forgotten this morning, Jim? Ah! if one of

our boys had not become a priest, I would have felt our lifework was incomplete."

"Yes; it could have been worse," commented Jim dryly; "look at Kate Morgan's life. And old Mrs. Trelworthy, who lies somewhere over there. . . . That girl of hers is a bad egg, and the boys didn't turn out. . . ."

But Mother was not paying attention to Jim. She saw William beckoning to them, and she remembered they had yet another visit awaiting them that Jubilee morning.

"Jim, it's time to start for Margaret Mary. I told Willie to let us know. We must not keep her waiting."

She took Jim's hand and together they went down the gravel path to where William's machine stood.

Somehow, a visit to the graveside always strengthened Mother. It was like looking at the credit side of Life's Ledger. Ann and Francie and the first Eddie were so safe for all eternity, that something of their safety was tangible: as tangible as the quiet and peace of a cloister.

William drove them across the city to the Visitation and there was Margaret Mary, soft-voiced and holy.

Already with her were Father Ed and several grandsons. Mother knew this daughter was Jim's favorite, so she let him go forward to the grating first for the Jubilee greetings.

Jim always seemed to slip his years in the presence of his "Maggie" and Mother sat talking with Father Ed and watching the other younger Jim of half a century ago.

It seemed an unnecessary interruption when Reverend Mother and the whole Community filed in. And the nuns greeted Mother and Jim as though they were royalty. In truth, they were greater this golden day.

Mother felt that here back of the grating was the same peace and quiet she had sensed in the sanctuary in the morning and had experienced by the graveside of the three an hour ago. Margaret Mary, her own daughter, was already Christ's consecrated spouse, leading a happy life, as useful as it was hidden, and though Mother knew Margaret Mary would not be present to close their eyes when the summons came, that she would never look down on their dead faces, yet there was a great strength in the knowledge their "Little Flower's" sacrifices and prayers would speed them through Purgatory's flame. There was also . . . Father Ed.

Again Jim shared Mother's thoughts, for as they came away, after the happy congratulations were given, he said to her: "Well, old girl, between Father Ed and Maggie I am thinking a strong wind of prayer will blow both of us over the ramparts of heaven."

Of the scores of letters that awaited them upon their return to their home, there was one, with a California postmark, that made Mother pause in her reading aloud to her husband. She said: "Wait a moment, Jim." Then she went over its careful, old-fashioned copperplate a second time:

" . . . and so, dear girl, in a few days you are rounding the golden mark! I was your bridesmaid that gay morning!

“ . . . I can't help reflecting while I write you my heartfelt congratulations, how the Good Lord has led me through many tribulations, and you through much happiness. Maybe, it is only fitting, for you became a part of Jim's life—his better half. I was too proud to fit into Pat's modest ambitions. He took to staying out and you know. . . .

“I have had to earn my bread in the sweat of my brow. It's true, Pat and I made it up at his last bedside in this hospital, and the good Sisters offered me a home here. And here I am for the few years longer. Neither Julia, my only living child, nor my granddaughters care a snap for me. Life has mellowed you. God forgive me! It has embittered me. And yet He is just. I took Pat 'for better, for worse'—and I should have been his helpmate. If I had been, I'd have had love in my old age.

“ . . . You lucky woman! You and Jim . . . ”

It was at this part Mother remembered Jim, and glanced up to see him sitting patiently watching her.

She had in mind to omit this letter, but—

“That telegram last evening beat her last letter across the continent,” observed Jim. “What's Pat Leland's widow got to say?”

Mother reread this letter a third time and this time aloud.

That evening the Golden Jubilee dinner at the long silver-laden table, circled with the happy faces of children and many grandchildren, brought their youth back to Mother and Jim. It was a choice merry circle that laughed about the An-

niversary table. Old Monsignor was the only guest.

While the dessert dishes were being cleared away, Henry rose and in his hand were a sheaf of telegrams. He read them aloud: the Episcopal Blessing and well wishes of their Bishop; the congratulations of the Caseys, the John Yowells, Junior, and other children of their wedding guests.

Then their pastor arose to speak.

“Mother and Jim,” began Old Monsignor, “your children have asked me to say what is in their hearts, all our hearts, this day of Jubilee. You were faithful to God through all these years, true to the troth you plighted long ago and the ever faithful God has not been outdone in generosity. On this day of your Jubilee you have seen some of your children safe in God’s Acre, and the rest, faithful to your training, in the world, the cloister, the sanctuary. Behold your jewels! Today in you is verified the promise made to the faithful bride and groom, for you see your children unto the third generation; your children’s children.

“God has blessed them. We see your sons succeed to their father’s business and they keep it successful. You have a competency and a home and love. But above all wealth has He blessed these children with the living memory of parents who were faithful, and when in the distant future the hour of departure for Home comes, you, Mother and Jim, may well say to Our Master, ‘Lord, we have tried to instruct unto justice those whom You have intrusted to our care.’ You may with confidence expect to hear from the Lips

Divine, 'Well done, My good and faithful servants!' "

Old Monsignor was finished, and in the little silence that rested around the table, Mother's thoughts were on the letter she had read aloud to Jim an hour before. She felt very grateful at the picture of love and home that the dining room framed, and she contrasted it with that lonely grandmother, her bridesmaid of fifty years ago.

She sought and covered Jim's hand in a tight embrace as they rose from the dining table.

Soon it was the night of their Golden Jubilee and Jim and Mother found themselves alone. Faint laughter and shouts told of the children's bed hour. William's voice, strangely like his father's, called up the stairs and there was unnatural silence and an occasional giggle. It was good to be alone after the excitement of the day. At first they did not talk, there was no need. Through the years in which they had grown to resemble each other, they had been given the gift of thinking similar thoughts, and at present their thoughts were not shot with sadness.

Out through the window of their familiar room showed a silver and black street, that led down to the church and, beyond, to the cemetery. Mother got up and stood by the window and quickly Jim joined her.

Some witchery of the moon dissolved away the wrinkles on the faces of Mother and Jim and as they looked into each other's eyes, he saw a girl and she saw a youth and all life lay like a mist-hung valley below their feet.

Half a century dropped away, with its joys and

its sorrows, its hopes and its disappointments, its trials and its graces, its gifts and its sacrifices, its achievements. They were back to the day on which they had started this life together. The boy, Jim, put his arm shieldingly around the girl, and he whispered as he had whispered once before, "Little girl, I have you!" And Mother, her head on his shoulder, replied as she had in that long ago, "O Jim, Jim, isn't God good!" He petted her snowy hair and in their happiness words were useless.

The old couple stood at the window, looking down the silver and black street that led to the church, God's Acre—and the rewards of all happy eternity. No fears assailed their hearts, their faith was sight, life was a friend, whose passing they welcomed, for both of them knew that shortly would dawn the day—the glorious day that would always be dawn, always be reunion—for they had been fruitful and faithful, and for such God does not wait for eternity to begin His reward.

"Isn't God good, Jim!" repeated Mother, and Jim's hand closed firmly over hers. Somehow, Jim always understood.

Later, Mother was weeping on Jim's shoulder and he laughed boyishly when she confessed, "Because I am so h-h-happy, Jim."

* * * * *

So, like golden Autumn, they waited the coming of the Harvester.

FLOWERS

HE KNEW he was saved. Joyfully he knew it. That instant there came over him the overpowering desire to withdraw and hide himself. One, whom he instinctively clung to, carried him away, and, placing him among the atoning flames, said:

“Michael, my own, your sentence is very merciful.”

“Oh, I know that,” cried the soul, and he saw again the vision of his first facing the Allknowing, while his whole fifty years, complete to every forgotten detail, had snapped by in one crowded flash, and then shamed he had heard the verdict: “Michael, you may not enter My Presence again, till the charity of your friends shall cause five Masses to be said for you.”

“Oh, He is the Merciful One,” repeated Michael: “Five Masses! Why, the charity of my friends will have them said within the week. And I deserved ten times ten times ten!”

And his angel left him happy in his pain.

Indeterminable ages later the angel came back and Michael asked reproachfully:

“Why have my friends left me this long forgotten?”

His angel replied:

“Haven’t you learnt there is no such word as ‘long’ with ‘us, and forgotten? No, you have not passed out of your friends’ memory yet. Come and see.”

And he took Michael to a familiar street that many branching elms threw into shade. Under one of these elms they stood and Michael was exclaiming: “Why, this is my—”

But as he spoke a smart delivery auto drew into the curb near them and came to a stop. A slim boy in blue and brass jumped down and running around to the back, threw open the shiny glass doors, diagonally across which were written in gold script a fashionable florist’s name. He lifted out an immense anchor of clustered rare roses, green leaves and silver-foil, and almost fell over a matronly little miss, with a solemn baby brother in tow, who stood open-mouthed in his path. She yanked her solemn charge from under the feet of destruction and sniffed audibly at the passing perfume.

“O-o-oh! ain’t that a beauty?” and then she confided to the driver, “That makes the sixth that’s come in the last hour, and there was one bigger’n that too,” and with a reminiscent sniff, “I just ’dore roses, don’t you?”

She watched the florist’s boy cut across the lawn toward the splendid house, fronted with its row of gray granite columns. He stooped to set the anchor down and Michael noted, for the first time, the great bow of crape swaying like the tolling of a silent bell to each faint touch of the afternoon breeze. Before the boy could ring, a

white-aproned maid appeared around the end of the wide piazza and to his cry "Grady's," she motioned silence and nodded and took the set piece. The boy dashed back and Staff's auto was gone. Said the angel:

"You see, Michael, my own, your friends have not forgotten. That was for you. Come, we will see more of their remembrances."

So leaving the children, who still kept vigil and count, they entered, all unannounced, Michael's home.

Hushed voices came indistinctly from nearby, but the angel led his companion into the darkened drawing room. The maid, who had received the anchor, was crossing the threshold. She passed carefully around the massive silver-fixed coffin that flickered with the shadows six sentinel candles cast, and made room among the massed flowers for her burden. Many and costly were these floral remembrances that filled the rear of the room and, springtide-like, overflowed into the broad hallway and across and into the library.

"See, Michael, these are of the charity of your friends." The angel showed him the oblong white cards attached to each piece. "They have not forgotten you. And this emblem of hope," he caused Michael to approach the anchor of flowers, "read from whom this is."

Michael recognized on the card the big boyish scrawl he loved.

"Even your dearest," continued the angel, "have remembered you with flowers."

“But why remember me with perishing flowers?” said the sufferer who had come back. “They don’t help me to see the vision of my Lord again.”

And Michael Grady thought sorrowfully of the five releasing Masses that could be offered for a fraction of what the magnificent anchor had cost.

“At least,” said the sympathizing guide, who knew where Michael’s thoughts flowed. “At least, tomorrow will bring you the relief of one Holy Sacrifice. Yours have arranged for the finest funeral ever held in the parish. They are draping the church now.”

But Michael stopped his angel. He, who needed Masses that his bonds might be loosened, did not care to hear the details of all this solemn splendor that his kin and his friends were lavishing on his wasting body. And so his silent angel conducted him back to his place of detention and, comforting him, left him.

Ages more of helpless burning past, and again Michael’s angel dropped to his side and this time he brought relief.

“Michael, my own, peace to thee,” and the angel touched the soul, and instantly Michael was in lesser pain. “A part of thy ransom has been paid, for this morning at three altars thy Lord and my Lord was offered.”

“Who were my real friends?” cried Michael, great gratitude welling up within him. “Who, Angel? Tell me, that I may never cease praying for them?”

“Your Requiem is just over,” said the angel,

"and she who had the second said was Mrs. Howe."

"Old Martha, whom I placed with the Little Sisters on Marygold Avenue?"

"The same," said his visitor; "as soon as she heard, she sent one of her few dollars, not to a florist's, but to the chaplain."

"May God reward her charity!" came from the depths of Michael's soul.

"He will that very shortly," murmured the guardian, who knew her sands were nearly run out.

"And to whose charity do I owe the third?"

"The third," continued his companion, "whom do you suppose paid that part of your ransom?"

"One of my boys or girls, of course," replied Michael proudly.

The angel was silent. Then:

"He who had that Mass said for you was Charles Davis."

"Davis! Charles Davis! I know no such Davis."

"Yes; you do. Remember three years ago, at my inspiration," it was the guardian angel who spoke a shade proudly now, "at my inspiration you became interested in a poor boy who wished to become a priest?"

The soul thought.

"There was a bright lad I gave that scholarship at St. Joe's to."

"That's Charles Davis. Boy though he is, he knows the true help for those who tarry here longing for release."

"But it can't be possible that of all my friends

—why! I knew thousands—an old dying woman and a forgotten boy are all that aid me now. My friends must have pity on me; some of them. Won't one of my friends remember me?"

"Yes; Michael, my own, they will remember as you did your friends who went before. You sent flowers and forgot, and they send flowers." Said his angel pityingly: "It is taking four open barouches to transport the valuable tokens of remembrance this morning, and the evening papers will say it was the most magnificent floral display seen in the city since Mayor Straus's funeral."

"What good are flowers to me now? Stones to one who hungers for bread!" cried the soul sadly. "Utterly useless! The very wastefulness of them gives me sharper pains." Then he said:

"Four open barouches of costly flowers at the head of the funeral of 'Mike' Grady, who hasn't smelt or worn a posey since he was a wee laddie back in Cabinteely!" And later with intense longing: "Just two Masses and my ransom is paid. At least some of my many friends will remember that much and release me."

* * * * *

When the first anniversary came slowly around, a few of the many sent remembrances, and they lay on Michael's grave till the gardener, seeing the browning flowers and brittle leaves, gathered them all up and burnt them.

But the soul of Michael, as the Hand of the Lord had touched it, lay helpless and hopeful in pain, still waiting the charity of two remaining Masses; and popular Michael had come to realize, as many another popular soul stayed in Purga-

tory is realizing, that most of those friends who show their respect for the dead by a telephone call to the nearest florist, cease to remember shortly after they hang up the receiver.

THE LAST LIE

THIRTEEN years ago he had been baptized John Aloysius Shea, but to the hundreds with the show, who knew Le Marvel used him in his pole act, he was "Kid Le Marvel." "Skip" Watson, the big, blond English boss of the Side Shows, invariably said "that snake charmer's brat." While The Royal Princess Carmelita herself usually referred to him as "the lad," or "my laddie"; yet, sometimes, in speaking of her son to the other freaks, she would grow impersonal and say "the Cushion's kid," or "Sticko's kid," for "Sticko, the Human Pincushion," in private life was John A. Shea, Sr.

That gentleman, just at present, instead of setting up his "props" for the opening of the gate, was obeying the Biblical injunction, and that he was not spoiling the child was audible throughout the four walls of the Side Show.

"The Pincushion" straightened up somewhat breathlessly to say:

"Now, kid, you're old enough to learn you can't get away with a lie. Lying, like murder, will out in the end. Get that. Freeze on to it, and," he continued ominously, "the next time I catches you juggling the truth to me, or Le Marvel, or anybody—you'll get *a* lickin'."

He crumpled up the damaging "Exhibit A,"—two cheap Piedmont cigarettes—and repeated: "A lickin'. Now get Minnie to hear your lessons."

The boy murmured—to his own ear, wisely—"Gee! I wonder what Pop calls this." But he shuffled obediently to the platform, where his mother was feeding her snakes.

Shea called across the tent to his wife:

"Min, dear, give the kid his spellin'." And to his heir: "Cut that noise, or we'll start the performance again."

Which promise immediately brought on fair weather.

The snake charmer opened a property trunk and got out the cordially hated Sixth Reader. She dropped it down to him.

"Not now, lad. Out in the Big Top and get it up yourself. Gracious! I can't hear you now. Grace is off her feed."

The lad edged instinctively toward the neighboring platform of the Sword Swallower, for he had a healthy horror of all snakes ever since the day, two seasons ago, when he had run up to his mother with a torn finger and one of her brutes had reared and struck him.

"I don't know just what ails her, but she's certainly off her feed." And the worried "Princess" dived a gloved hand into the blue span-gled box and brought up the dangling five feet of a diamond-backed rattler.

"Poor ol' Grace aint well this morning, is oo?" Then remembering her son, she called after him: "Not 'fore we open, laddie. Grace'll keep me

busy till then. May have time after your act, so know it when you come back for supper."

To the beady-eyed head above her fingers: "Poor ol' Grace is off her feed, aint it?" And almost pathetically, "Don't die on me, old girl, or I'll be out fourteen bones, and I can't afford to lose that much jack."

The boy ducked under the side wall disgustedly. He detested the daily lessons as much as he hated to hear his mother baby talk to her pets. But both were as regular as the afternoon show, and if the page was not known, "The Human Pincushion" was informed, and, as the boy had once confessed to his friend, Jim Jerry, who sold tickets before the Side Show: "Believe me, Jim, for a skinny old gent, the old man has some wing!"

Still smarting under the effects of that "some wing" he rounded the corner of the tent and, paralleling the gray canvas wall of the Side Show headed for the "Big Top."

He shouldered his way, with showman contempt for all "rubes," through the crowd of boys that the "White Tops" always attract.

Again he ducked under the side wall and straightened up in the cool "Big Top." There were but a handful now inside the mighty canvas arena that in a couple of hours would seat the town's population.

Some ushers were smoking and reading the sporting sheet; a few tired canvas men were stretched out (where they had no business to be) on the "reserves," and away in the quiet of the

far end of the tent a gruff-voiced group of candy butchers were profanely shooting craps.

Overhead, "Old Man" Tosca of the "Flying Toscas," in his shirt sleeves, was putting a new rope in a ring.

Feeling in need of sympathy after the late interview, the boy decided to go aloft. He skipped across the sawdust and, sticking his reader in his waist, caught the swaying rope. Up he climbed, hand over hand, till he swung himself on to a horizontal bar across from the veteran trapeze artist.

"'Morning, Mr. Tosca," he began socially.

"Aint I told you, Kid Le Marvel, never to come up here 'less the net is spread?" Tosca almost purred the question. "Well, then, get down, and get pretty quick." And when "Old Man" Tosca spoke in that quiet way, the boy knew from painful experience it were better to obey promptly.

He slid the thirty feet to earth.

"Thank you, Tosca. Hope you miss a ring this after'," he called up, and then, as his loneliness was growing on him, he did the Charlie Chaplin walk down the track till he was abreast of "the blues." Here he bowed to imaginary thousands, like "Bub" La Salle, the Chaplin clown. Then turning a couple of "cartwheels," he sank down on the bottom tier of the blue-painted seats.

He was feeling as blue as the seat he sat on. Only at the last town Jim Jerry, in a clumsy effort to win Kid Le Marvel to the practice of truth, had been telling lurid, personal anecdotes of lies and their sometimes startling punish-

ments. The boy had promised Jim, and had really meant it, to speak the whole truth hereafter. But old habits were strong, and who would ever expect those two cigarettes to work themselves out of an inside pocket at that moment? "Me Guardian Angel musta pulled 'em out, just to teach me to tell the trut'," he murmured. "Well, I'm goin' to try hereafter, sure."

Then he opened the book and got down to study, for he did not care to have a second interview the same day with "Sticko, The Human Pincushion."

The open page told the tale of a boy and his inseparable dog chum. The involuntary student went over it till he thought he was sure of the spelling, and then he fell to dreaming over the cut that showed "Tom" and "Sport" at a brookside, and the dripping puppy, stick in mouth, returning to his master.

"That pitcher dorg looks like 'Bub' La Salle's Nixie, an' Nixie sleeps wid ol' 'Bub' !" His berth was in the same car as the clown's, and he knew. "Aw, gee! I'd give thirty-eight cents to have a dorg like that. He'd keep me from lyin'. He'd be a frien' an' I aint got many of them things around the show."

"Pop, he don't care, and Mom, she thinks much more of that there Grace than o' little Willie."

Then his eyes fell longingly on the cut again. "Yes, sir. I c'd train a kid dorg like that to lub me. He wouldn't have to be a bright pup, neither. A thick 'un 'ud do, that'd pal wid me."

He dropped his hand and it rested on something soft and warm.

The boy rose promptly.

There at the toe-piece of "the blues," its belly furrowing the dust, crouched a half-grown gray cur. It crawled tremblingly toward him, its tail begging a welcome. Close to his shoe it sank. The boy touched it with his foot and instantly the dog rolled over on its back, with pleading paws up-raised and tail still thumping of friendship.

"Well, you kid dorg! You certainly threw a scare into me. I thought you was one of Mother's darlings."

The tail was pounding violently, now that recognition had come.

He dropped back on "the blues" and whistled. The pup came hesitatingly, but it came, and molded itself ever so humbly into his lap.

"Git down and git pretty quick." The tone was Tosca's, but the puppy only crouched lower, its tail ever vibrating.

That disobedience enslaved Kid Le Marvel.

Then he examined his new friend critically. The result was most discouraging.

"See here, kid dorg! Y'may been borned with a gray coat, but I tink it was white oncet. It'll take a ton o' suds to tell."

He held the dog up by the scuff of the neck, and it whimpered.

"Mutt! I knowed it."

He put the bundle down and got up.

"Hungry, kiddo? I say. Eats? Savvy? No savvy?"

"Well, I am, so come along, pal, and feed with me," and he gathered up the pup and book.

Across the street to where the cook tent was

pitched, he whistled his way, and dropped into a seat alongside of the Fat Girl.

“ ‘Lo, Babe,” he called socially. Then, holding the dog firmly in his lap, he continued:

“Auntie Annie, we have wid us to-day—what y’ tink? Little ol’ pal o’ mine. Jinx, the was-white-oncet kioodle. Now the ’sclusive pal of Mr. John A. Shea, Jr. Annie, Jinx. Jinx, Aunt Annie.”

Annie laughed good-naturedly and offered “Jinx” a bone, which was ravenously accepted.

“Go long, John, with your spiel. Where did you steal the mutt?”

“Crooked nawthing! A real lady, wid rocks and furs in a swell car, stopped me, when I was downtown this morning, and she said: ‘Little boy, I like your looks. You’re handsome ’nough to be the twin of me Percy, an’ I wants you to accept this real, imported-in-bond kioodle, what the King of——’”

“What was your Daddy saying this morning about—” interrupted Annie, reminiscently, rising from the table.

“Aw! Annie, I forgot.” And he clapped his unengaged hand to his mouth. “Ain’t never goin’ to tell no more. No; I found the dorg in the Big Top. It sniffed the lions, an’ was scart stiffer’n a layin’ out rod.”

“That’s better, John,” said the Fat Girl; “Mom and I wants you to cut the lies. You’ll never, never gain anything by ’em. Going to?”

“Yes, ma’am,” came in earnest response.

“Now you’re talking!” Then, hearing the first

strains of the Side Show band, she swallowed her coffee and waddled away to her platform.

The boy ate rapidly and the pup in his lap fared heavenly. Finally he gulped a slab of what he called "Lemon Moran" pie, and shot out into the open.

It was nearing one o'clock, and aristocratic autos and plebeian trolleys were dumping happy thousands on the circus grounds.

Re-crossing the street to get back to the main lot, an indignant voice hailed him:

"Hey! I like your nerve! That there's my Fido what's y'got. An' you give 'im to me right away." A boy considerably above his size grabbed his arm and attempted to rescue the disputed property.

"Your dorg!" Kid Le Marvel's new-formed resolution flashed up before him. He hesitated a moment. Then he looked at the pup. "Your dorg! Well, my frien', you'd better make yourself mighty scarce around this here lot. Why, boy, you know what this dorg done? You did, an' you'd be in the next town by 2 P.M. Yes, sir, 'fore that."

"W-what did he do?" The owner of "Fido" dropped his arm dazedly.

"Done? Oh, nawthin' much. Only don't let Mr. 'Skip' Watson, the General Manager of the show, know that youse is the owner of this fierce, bloodthirsty brute. He'd kill you like that, boy."

The speaker snapped the fingers of his free hand under the other's nose. "Yes, sir. Like that. That's wot me fadder'd do, if he seen you."

"But, w-what Fido do?"

"Do?" with studied indifference "Only bit

‘Prince,’ our \$12,000 lion, when he was asleep. The two doctors think he’s got the hiderfobia, all right, all right. Now you know what your dorg done?

“So, Mr. Owner of Fido, wot bites \$12,000 lions, you make yourself scarce, or I’ll call a officer, an’ you’ll sleep t’night in the pie house. Git.”

Kid Le Marvel’s face never relaxed until the fleeing youth had disappeared around the distant group of trolleys. Then he said to the pup in an ashamed whisper:

“Jinx, you ol’ lion-eater, I broke me resolution, an’ I shouldn’t oughta done that. But I don’t wanta lose you, little ol’ Jinx.” And he gave the puppy an affectionate squeeze that made it yelp.

Then he headed for the Side Shows.

A few hundred were already within, and they were just flowing away from the platform of “The Royal Princess Carmelita” to the next stand of the Sword Swallower, where the inside lecturer, the ascetical looking “Dope” McGraw, was opening his “spiel” by inviting all “to step up a little closter.”

The boy walked up to his mother’s platform. She was made up now—short skirt, and bodice of Alice blue, and rouged and jeweled to the eye-lids. He heard her answering in that impersonal, sing-song tone that freaks and convicts affect, when they speak of themselves, the curious questions of two women.

“Yes, lady, this one is gentle, and almost as affectionate as a baby.”

“Yes, lady, warm milk once a day.”

Still talking to the women about the slender

green snake, that coiled around her wrist, her eyes traveled to her son. She frowned at the sight of the puppy, but she gave no other sign of recognition, for it was a strict rule in the Shea family not to know each other during show hours.

It was getting close to opening time, so the boy edged around to the back of the platform, and there he found what he wanted. It was the empty box of the big Texan racer that had died in the last town.

With a hurried "So long, pal; I'll be back after me act," he tumbled the surprised dog into this box. He snapped the perforated lid, and heard a smothered yelp as he raced to the Dressing Tent.

This was now filled with men in all stages of make-up, and he found Le Marvel already dressing. The Kid dove into the long trunk for his costume, and three minutes later stood up in his monkey makeup, with saucy red cap and jacket and trailing tail.

He smiled as he said to himself happily: "I'm goin' to make a dorg outer that ol' pal. Yes, sir, a trick dorg."

Then he disappeared back of "Bub" La Salle's trunk, where, a safe distance beyond the ken of Le Marvel, he lit up a forbidden cigarette and fell adreaming out a schedule of training that would have terrorized the imprisoned dog had he suspected a tenth of the plans of his new master.

Later, he heard Le Marvel's impatient "Hey, kid. Where's that—" but the boy cried "Ready" and bounded into view.

They tarried at the "back door" in the middle of a crowd of "kinkers" and clowns waiting their

signal. The lad, as he always did before his entrance, made a hurried request to his Guardian Angel, and a sort of Sign of the Cross. Then a moment later the tall Le Marvel and his midget partner bounded into ring number one.

There they bowed to the oval of thousands and the boy skinned up the slim pole that Le Marvel balanced on his shoulder. Twenty feet he climbed, till he swayed almost on a level with the aërial acts, and there he caught one foot in the "mechanic" and, bracing the other against the pole, straightened out horizontally.

Looking down, he could see the straining man, with upturned eyes, watching his every move and anticipating it. Something in the tense face of Le Marvel made him realize that their act was what is technically called "a death act," and if the "mechanic" slipped, or Le Marvel miscalculated the living weight on top of the pole, there would be little hope of "the weight" surviving the fall. So he murmured the thought that came to his lips—"Watch me, Gawd"—and then at a sharp "Now" from the ground, pulled out the American flag from his bosom and waved it.

That always took with the crowd, and what pleased him most were the shrill yells of delight from the countless children. Then more "business" in the air, but he went through it mechanically, as he was thinking of a boxed dog.

As he came down carefully he made his plans.

"I'll get Mom to hear me now, and then I'll be free wid Jinx till the night show."

He dropped lightly to the ring and, delighted with the near future, put a snap into the "cart-

wheels'' and hand-springs he was doing that brought out a round of applause.

Le Marvel smiled and the boy smiled. Then he made a spring and perched on the man's shoulder, and thus, smiling and bowing, they made their usual exit.

Once outside the great flap of canvas that separated the "Big Top" from the dressing tents, the boy jumped down and Le Marvel gave him a blow on the ear that sent him spinning into an astonished, white-painted clown, who was awaiting his entrance.

"Now, kid, how many times I gotta tell you to pay attention up there? I almost lost you twice to-day. Cut that dream stuff when you're doin' your act. If you want to get mashed, I don't want to be the executioner. So, let me catch you wool-gathering up at the end of the pole this evening and I'll—" Le Marvel broke off, but the threat was more effective to the boy than if it had been worded.

He rubbed his throbbing ear and, without a word, went and changed. He remembered where he had left his reader, and just outside the side wall of the "Big Rag," where the cries of the myriads within sounded like the rumbles of distant thunder, he gave the lesson a thorough, but hasty, review, and, feeling sure he knew it passably, shot away to the now silent "Kid Show."

Within, most of the platforms were deserted. His father was not there, and he saw his mother and Annie knitting. He would have liked to release "Jinx" first, but Mrs. Shea saw him and called:

“Come, lad, and I’ll hear you now. Though I declare to gracious I’m all in. The fool questions some rubes ask, Annie!” and “The Royal Princess” sniffed at the memory of the afternoon’s grilling.

The Fat Girl nodded good-naturedly. “I gets ’em too, Minnie. The wimming’s the worse.”

The boy climbed up on Annie’s reinforced platform and gave the reader to his mother. Then, kneeling at her knee, he read, as haltingly as a child in the Fourth Grade, the story of “Tom” and “Sport.”

Annie, who couldn’t read herself, stopped her knitting to listen wonderingly to this accomplished scholar. Satisfied, she nodded approval.

Then “The Princess” took the reader in her “royal” hand and, saying, “Good, laddie; now let’s hear the spellin’,” she made her son stand up before her.

Every word, except the deceptive “knife,” was spelt correctly, and “The Royal Princess” spilled his cup of happiness when she closed the book and said:

“Atta boy, lad. I wisht you’d always know your lessons like that. Y’can go. Don’t get scrappin’ or smokin’. And,” she added, remembering the morning’s trouble, “’member, a liar always lies himself into greater trouble, laddie. And I want my lad to be truthful.”

“Yes, Mom.” He leaped down happily. Lessons were over till to-morrow and he was free. He flung the reader into his mother’s property trunk and went joyously around to the rear of the platform. As he was about to open the empty

snake box and reclaim his "pal" dog, Carmelita called to him: "O lad, come here. Annie wants you."

He came up to the edge of Annie's platform again.

The Fat Girl was fumbling in her skirt and finally produced a gaudy purse. The boy brightened visibly and leaped up on the platform. He knew Annie of old.

She clumsily opened the clasp and searched for a coin.

"John," she said. She was the only one around the show who used his Christian name. "John, for being truthful at dinner time. Auntie Annie likes that better than knowing your lessons."

He took the half dollar.

"Perhaps it'll buy a collar for that pup you had to dinner. Though if it was my mutt, I'd spent it all on soap. But suit yourself, John."

"What's all this?" asked the snake charmer. "A dog? Keep it away, lad, from my babies."

And he said he certainly would.

"Oh, Mom, wait till you see Jinx! He's a beaut. I'm goin' to train that dorg! D'you want to see 'im?"

"I might as well," said his mother resignedly. Her taste for pets stopped at her own kind. "But hurry, laddie. There's the chariot races and we'll soon reopen."

Afar they could hear the faint rumble of the heavy cars sweeping around the near end of the track, and they knew that the afternoon show was nearly over. Annie gathered up her knitting and hid it.

“Aw! Lemme show ’im to you just a sec, Mom.”

“Just a sec, then, lad.”

The boy jumped to get “Jinx,” but his mother stopped him with:

“Another thing, lad. Whatever you do, keep away from that snake-box behind the platform.”

“Why?” he asked innocently.

“ ’Cause Grace was a bit unmanageable and I put her there this morning, so as she’d have quiet.”

The half dollar dropped musically to the board, rolled over and dropped off the platform.

A wee, strained voice asked: “I say, Mom, you put that there rattler in that empty box there?” He pointed.

She nodded, suspecting nothing.

“The money dropped there,” said Annie, indicating the spot where it had disappeared.

“Aw! let it rot.”

“Lad!” said his mother sharply.

But Kid Le Marvel, whose heavens were tumbling, fell on his knees and buried his face in his mother’s lap.

Outside “The Imperial Hawaiian Band,” born to a man in Dixie, was giving its opening “bally-hoo,” and the snake charmer knew she should be on her own platform, or she would hear shortly from “Skip” Watson.

She kissed the boy awkwardly, sensing some of his tragedy, and murmured: “And my laddie is sorry he told that boy a lie about his dog, ain’t he?”

A hot cheek nodded against her hand.

"Maybe it's all right, lad dear." But she knew in her heart that she was raising false hopes.

Then, taking her weeping little son by the arm, the "Royal Princess Carmelita" went with him to the rear of her platform.

The advance guard of the public were already straying in at the other end of the tent, and she had only a minute. Some mother instinct told her to stand between the boy and the box as she raised the lid.

In one corner lay the "dorg."

"Then that's me last lie," sobbed Kid Le Marvel.

THE IMPOTENT POWERS

THE three men, whom prosperity clothed as with a well-fitting garment, paused by the shadowed marble rails of the South Portico. The arresting grandeur of morning and Monument held them in bonds of reverie. Below them, in the exclusive Grounds, grew variegated bush and bed, and beyond, out of the smooth green mound, soared the commanding beauty of The Monument. Rare sunshine gloved the quiet white shaft. Into the blue it rose, this chastest of obelisks, that a grateful nation had erected to him whose memory fittingly lives first in the hearts of his countrymen.

The vista did provoke thoughts, contented self-satisfied thoughts in the breasts of these three men. The first of this group fancied he saw in this mighty memorial to his immortal predecessor the symbol of the vast authority it was his of right to wield. For he was Chief Executive of a great nation. A free people had chosen him as their leader and so his influence reached to many horizons and he stood a Saul among his peers, even as this proud column arose, overtowering all.

Not so The Monument appeared to the President's brother, the grim, frosty-bearded man, who represented a sovereign state in his country's Senate. His mind, from long habit, easily pictured

this tall shaft across the summer green sea as built of more precious blocks than mere marble. Easily he viewed its commanding height as accumulated wealth personified. And it might well typify his own amassed possessions, for like the ancient plutocrat of Phrygia, whatever this new Midas had touched, these many years, had yielded him a golden hundredfold.

But to the keen gray sight of the youngest of these three successful men, the lofty tribute to the nation's Founder signified other, nobler things. What if great authority had decreed its erection and wealth had quarried its many parts. This surgeon knew that power and riches had lain helplessly by till Science, with her cunningness, had achieved this engineering triumph.

Thus each of the trio, as he silently smoked his expensive after-breakfast cigar, imagined he saw in this man-made memorial something that was essential to his own eminence; something that justified his own success. And the thoughts of President, Senator, and surgeon were proud, pleasant thoughts.

A laugh interrupted their satisfied reveries, and the radiant Bride of the surgeon stood framed in the doorway. She herself in summer white was emblematic of the glories of the June morning. Youth and Health and Joy came attending her. She took a step onto the deep balcony and then paused at the sight of the quiet three.

But the President shook his head, saying: "No, daughter; not matters of state this hour. Join us and share us your thoughts, for our Monument is a veritable preacher in stone."

“Yes; come and speak,” urged the others, and they watched her with affectionate eyes, for in her their power and wealth and love were centered.

The young matron acquiesced with girlish grace, and, standing with her hands clasped behind her back, she dropped her eyes to the green base. Then with a swift upward appraising glance, she swept the hundreds of feet of sheer marble, up, up to the black slits, through which early bird tourists gazed on the capital city spread out as the beauties of a feast far below. Finally, she turned with a serious smile from the sight of the white Monument and looked meditatively at her uncle, her father, her husband.

“The Monument against the morning? Why, my dear relatives, to me the lessons of its sermon are threefold.” She addressed the President. “Of course, Dad, it’s firm and commanding as your will in the execution of your constitutional powers. Then it’s piled high, block on block, cube on cube, almost as high as—” she gave the rugged old Senator a tolerant toss of her head, “—as high as Uncle Franklin’s scandalous possessions. And, lastly, as the clergyman would say, we see in its completion, the technical skill required of the stored ages, the dexterity found in master hands, like——” she took up affectionately one of the strong, sensitive hands of her husband, “—like this distinguished surgeon’s.

“But more insistent than all these, there is a happy application to me. For does not our good Monument teach me this blessed morning how fortunate I be. Verily, I am beloved of God. What woman in the land, or in the world, has such a trio

of nearest and dearest to protect her from all misfortune, to shield her from every harm, to grant her her heart's desires, as I have? Answer me that, most powerful sirs?"

The three men gave gay approval to her analysis of the still sermon. And while they gallantly pledged her, who was to them their most cherished possession, shielded happiness down many bright years, the thin blue gray clouds from three Havanas ascended over their heads and dissolved into the clear air, till the smoke became one with God's crystal atmosphere.

But neither Power nor Wealth nor Science noticed that more symbolic sermon.

Then while they stood laughing and contentedly gazing across at the gleaming white pile that had preached to them a sermon they desired to hear, a cloud floated by on high, and the shadow of that cloud fell on the tip of The Monument and dropped inexorably downward, dimming the great stone's brightness.

The sunshine went out and an infinite shadow rested over the vista that awoke other thoughts, compelling thoughts in the breasts of the three men. A certain sadness fell upon them with the cloud's passage. The proud message of The Monument was no longer remembered, and each of the men felt finite; less rich, less skilled, less powerful.

The Bride, as with some vague foreboding, clutched for protection the plain gold cross, that lay, a solitary ornament, upon her bosom, and, forgetful of her trio of protectors, whispered a prayer to the Heart Divine.

“It grows colder,” she shuddered; “let us go in.”

“Cold in warm June!” scoffed the President, but he saw his brother buttoning his light coat about him, and through the frame of the surgeon passed a shiver.

And, presently, the three men escorted the Bride within.

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It was toward dawn of the next day, and lights burnt untimely in The Mansion. All evening there had been hurried goings and comings. Power had sent forth imperative messages and mighty cities had sent their best in willing haste. Distracted Wealth had torn open its purse to the widest. Even at that moment a swift plane was bringing, high above the black prairies of Ohio, the most able surgeon in the land.

And all because, in an upper chamber, the Bride of a few months lay very weak.

The thaumaturgical hands of her husband had operated at early evening. Other willing hands, hands that had worked surgical miracles in many clinics, had aided him. But the patient was not rallying.

She lay listlessly on her bed of white, while impotently by stood the three men.

The sad father eyes of the first reflected his helplessness.

“I can do nothing further, then?” implored the President of the most powerful nation on earth.

“Your power can do absolutely nothing now,” came the reply.

The old Senator, his thoughts still on the

strength of his vast holdings, offered: "I'll gladly give my many silver mines to the one who saves her. I'll give—I'll give——"

"She waits at the dim gateway. Your wealth is poverty-stricken there," came the answer.

"There is no hope," confessed the surgeon, looking down on his pallid wife. "We have reached the uttermost limits of our abilities. Medical Science is helpless now."

"Helpless now," came the echo.

And then it was, while these three men, each one all powerful in his sphere of life, stood impotently by the last bed of her whom they idolized, that into the hushed chamber was ushered another man.

He was dressed in worn black, this Ambassador of another world, and he walked with eyes downcast. Yet his step was Christly, for he came in authority, and over his heart he bore The Companion, whose companionship is surety for all who would make the great journeying-forth.

Then Power and Wealth and Science drew back and the Ambassador sat by the bedside and into his ears alone came the contrite words that told of human frailties. When the tale was a secret forever, the hand of the Ambassador lifted and crossed and pardoned.

Power watched that hand move and he realized that greater authority had been exercised in that action than ever it was given to him.

Then the Ambassador, bending assuringly over the quiet bed, began to anoint with sacred oils the brow of the Bride. When he was done, the surgeon noted that a dawn of contentment had broken

over the wan face and he knew it was more than his skill had wrought—could work.

Now to the little white table the Ambassador turned and adored Him, who reflected the candles' gleam. Rising, the Ambassador faced the Bride and he brought her One, who was a Safe Companion for the long way. One, who would go with her out beyond the confines of the greatest nation and lead her through peaceful stretches unto the domains of Eternal Peace.

The old Senator, whom Long Life had taught to weigh all service upon the scales of gold, now learnt he had not the wealth to purchase for his well-beloved niece such companionship.

Then while all stood reverently by, this stoled Ambassador spoke authoratively in His Master's Name. He encouraged this frail traveler that her going-forth might be in courage. He bade those fallen fellows of the Angels to retire and vanish "like smoke or as wax before the fire." He ordered the white company of noble Angels, Thrones, and six-winged Seraphim, to meet this one and conduct her into the blessed midst of myriads.

Confidently commanded the Ambassador in the plenitude of his power: "Depart, O Christian Soul."

* * * * *

Within the upper chamber Power and Wealth and Science wept like little children, for three hearts were heavy with the knowledge that their sorrow was tinged with the bitter realization of their finiteness.

* * * * *

Without, through the windows of the upper chamber, the lofty Monument was preaching to Power and Wealth and Science another, a most consoling sermon, for now in the peaceful moonlight the white shaft pointed impressively heavenward, as though it were the very Finger of God.

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THE TRUE CAPTAIN

“**D**AY’LL break in an hour now,” said seaman Wallace hopefully, balancing his ice-coated oars and peering into the bleak east, “and then some steamer’ll pick us up, or we’ll surely make the Connecticut shore.” And he bent to his weary rowing.

Out of the cold stillness of the late night a seventh wave swelled up and the small lifeboat was lifted and shot down into the dark trough. A sheet of Arctic water sprayed the bows, and, falling, soaked the bunched-up figure that lay under the smashed bowseat. The figure moved heavily and moaned.

“Is it hurtin’ much, Oscar?” asked the boy, who crouched at big Wallace’s feet.

No answer! So he stopped his endless bailing and lifted the shiplight. It cast a dingy yellow glow beyond the broad shoulders of the sailor and showed the indistinct form of the Swedish steward, and beyond and above the fog.

“He’s in pretty bad shape, he is, Genie.” Wallace never ceased to row. “That crazy leap from the boat deck did more than break his arm, I’m thinking; and,” he added in a lower tone, “he’ll freeze stiffer’n a marlin spike ’fore daylight this weather.” To the boy at his knee he said:

“Cold, Cap’n?”

The boy compressed his lips and again braced the lantern against his foot, but Wallace noticed how stiffly the fingers closed as he doubled to continue bailing the slushy bilge.

So did the listening girl in the stern-sheets. She glanced questioningly at her fellow-passenger, but he sat, head sunk on breast, and saw nothing—in the same position he had taken hours ago, when the seaman ordered him to take an oar, and the two had had words. Then she stretched her frosted muff and touched the blue peajacket.

“Come, lad. You have most of the water out now. Sit between us. It can’t be colder here.”

“Cap’n” looked up to the rower, who nodded, so dropping his bailer, he wiggled back between the two. His teeth chattered as he mumbled “Thank ye, M-Miss,” and the girl felt the uncontrollable shaking of the small frame. With quick sympathy she commanded the raw hands and folded them in her furs. He raised grateful eyes to her face.

“That’s right, Miss. Warm up the Cap’n’s flippers.”

The owner of the flippers grinned.

“Is ‘Cap’n’ your name?” said the girl.

Wallace replied:

“He’s the captain’s son and,”—he shot a contemptuous glance at the male passenger—“if anything should happen to me, this boy’s the only man to take command here.”

With his left he back-paddled, keeping the lifeboat head on to the invisible swells. Then as though continuing his thoughts aloud:

“Yes; and he would, Miss, for he’s shown to-night there’s the makings of the true captain in him. Haven’t you, old man?”

Gene nodded solemnly.

“But ain’t you chilled yourself, Miss?” The big sailor spoke again.

“More than a bit, but my furs protect me yet. Thank God, it was cold in my stateroom and I kept ’em on, or, when it happened, I’d never have thought of them. I didn’t save much,” she added with a failure of a smile, shuddering at the remembrance of the indelible horror of midnight.

“Well, you were lucky to save yourself, girl. There are many won’t do that to-night,” complained the man seated with her. “We’re not ashore yet, not ashore yet.”

She turned to the voice that came cryingly from the muffled throat.

“Oh! I thought you were asleep, Mr., Mr.,——”

“Asleep!” snorted Wallace, and then checked himself with a savage pull at his oars.

The ship-light sputtered and flared up, and Miss Madison caught a sharp snapshot of the other’s features. Instinctively she drew the boy Gene closer, for the flash revealed the florid face of the passenger that had staggered into her, when they were crossing the gangplank under the white arcs at Fall River.

That was only last evening in actual time, but now it seemed a crowded eternity since she had boarded this Sound steamer for New York. While she slept, a silent ship had glided out of the fog and cut the mortal gash in the *City of Worcester*. She had awakened at the shock and saw the dying

electrics in the stateroom ceiling. Terrified, she groped along the rapidly slanting passageway, up the difficult main stairway, and out into the black scramble on the deck. There she had pushed and been pushed; she had been frightened by the wild shrill cries about her and later calmed by a steady voice and its cool commands that came unceasingly from the hidden bridge.

Then came a rush toward her. She had swayed and fainted—how long she knew not—but she remembered distinctly hearing the same steady voice, this time leaning over her, say: “Here’s another woman. In with her.” Steel arms had lifted to hurl her into this lifeboat, as it was being lowered from the creaking davits.

Then occurred the second horror of the night, and she remembered gripping the seat when the bow-falls parted, and half the boatload slipped into the inky surface, and she still felt the nip of the bitter water the boat shipped in righting herself. It burnt like a surgeon’s scalpel.

“Where are we, sailor?”

Seaman Wallace did not reply.

“We’re not—,” she hesitated to word her thought, “are we?”

“Not yet, Miss,” lied the sailor. But encouragingly, “With daylight I’ll be able to row toward the other boats. Can’t be far off. We’d never have parted company, if it weren’t for this cursed fog. But, anyway, light’ll lift that an’ show the Connecticut shore, an’ there,”—he nodded to the attentive boy—“we’ll find the captain awaiting us.”

The captain’s son sniffed.

“No; we won’t find Pa there, ’cause,” he added with sea pride, “he’s capt’un of the *Worcester* and no capt’un would leave his ship when his ship’s hurted that way.” Emphatically, “Not my Pa.”

And again Miss Madison thought she heard the ring of the steady voice from the bridge, and she knew what the boy said was so.

But with the coming of the desired dawn, snow flurried and lifeboat No. 9 bobbed aimlessly to the slaty waves of Long Island Sound. The fog thickened to a solid gray, shutting out everything but the cold. That was biting like pincers now, and even the last barrier of Miss Madison’s furs had long been carried.

Through the January air she saw the broad hands of seaman Wallace, like blue claws, pulling mechanically at the long shiny oars; while back of him, under the broken seat, the twisted shape of the Swedish steward lay motionless; his blue eyes open wide and one arm doubled back in a grotesque attitude. And she recalled as connected with this unnatural arm, the screaming leap of this poor fellow from the black above; the thud with which he had struck the bowseat; the shotlike crack that followed, and his commencing to moan.

She turned away as though to shut out the remembrance, and saw the passenger next Gene still sat huddled up, now and then whining to himself, and that the boy, hands locked in hers under the furs, slept exhausted; his head resting against the frozen sealskin of her jacket.

Seaman Wallace stopped pulling and listened,

but the only sound that came through the killing cold was the grating of ice along the water line.

Gene woke and stared about him, startled.

"Why, it's day!" he exclaimed. Then seeing the set face of the Swede: "Say, Wal, what's the matter with Oscar? He looks awful funny," and the boy pointed.

Seaman Wallace twisted to look over his shoulder.

"I guess Oscar's pain has gone now, old man," he called back. Then drawing in his oars, he got up with great difficulty and clambered over the intervening seat. He broke the body away from where it was wedged.

"It's better to lighten ship, Cap'n," said the sailor, lifting it, and Miss Madison noted the loose arm dangle.

He rested his burden on the slippery gunwale, and the girl half rose from her place as she realized what he was about.

"Oh, don't! Please, don't!"

The sudden movement of Miss Madison unbalanced Wallace. He dropped the hard thing and clutched at the sleeted airtight compartment. His numb fingers found no purchase, and he and the corpse pitched heavily into the satin sea.

Oscar bobbed up, and Miss Madison sickened as the wet blue eyes looked steadily at her. Then it rolled over, and only the huddled shoulders were visible floating into the fog.

"O my God!" cried Miss Madison, burying her face to shut out that sight.

Gene had sat like one held, as his large friend disappeared. Open-mouthed, he craned his neck

to see the struggling sailor, but the heavily clothed Wallace did not rise within the horizon of the encircling gray.

The boy heard the girl scream, and then it was he realized that he had come into his command, that on him, the captain's son, now rested the safety of all three. He crushed down his rising terror; he was captain of this drifting boat, and a true captain he must be. In an instant he turned and shook the other passenger.

"Mister! Mister! We gotta row. You gotta." He kept worrying his arm. "Come out of it. You must take an oar. I can't handle both alone. Ah! have a heart!" and he half dragged the whimpering passenger to the vacant bench and thrust an oar into his fingers. He dropped alongside, and, bracing his feet against a cross strip, took the other long blade.

"O my God! How he stared at me." Miss Madison was sobbing convulsively. "I can't die that way. I can't." Clumsily she unbuttoned her jacket and searched for an extra handkerchief. "I mustn't. Oh, don't let me, boy," and she hid her face in the found white expanse.

"You won't, lady," said Gene, trying to keep some stroke with his partner. "I'll make the Connecticut shore. It's this way." He bobbed with confidence to the invisible starboard. "Soon as this fog lifts, I'll pick it up." And authoritatively, "Pull, Mister. Pull harder." And later, "Aw! put your back into it."

Mechanically obedient, the passenger rowed and reluctantly the fog opened and followed the lifeboat. The unusual exercise was sobering the man

and he began to realize clearly for the first time since the collision the great peril he was in. For he had the heart of a coward, eminently selfish, and the only peril he considered was his own.

"What did that big, burly sailor do that for, boy?"

"What? Fall overboard?"

"Yes! he knew I needed him to get ashore."

"Well, old Wallace is drowned, but me and you gotta get this lady ashore now, so work, Mister."

"I can't die now. O Lord! I can't," whined Miss Madison.

"That's all right, lady. You won't," encouraged Gene.

"But I will and I can't. Oh, I'm so cold," and she lifted a countenance on which tears had frozen. Then remembering that last solid look as the steward had rolled over, she clutched at the edge of the stern seat.

"Hold that ship lantern between your hands, Miss. It'll warm you some," commanded the boy. The girl did.

The fog came down gloomier as the morning light strengthened. They pulled in silence as beneath the apex of a soft gray dome, that ever advanced and kept the moving boat stationary under its center. No welcome noise came across the awakening waters of the Sound; not even the bell of a fogbound vessel.

Once a wing flapped and a whitish gull wheeled within their tomb, but scared by the oars' splash, it stopped in the very act of alighting on the surface and disappeared through the gray wall.

The man pulled awkwardly, burying the spoon

deep at most strokes, and the boy, sizes too small for his oar, made little progress, while the frightened girl, chilled as never before, hugged the scant warmth of the pale flame as though it was gold, and sobbed hysterically.

"Weepin'll do her good, don't you think so, Mister?" anxiously puffed "Cap'n," breathless from his man's exertion. "Gee! I'm all in."

The passenger started to reply, when his oar missed. It seared the water white, and he shot back, tumbling between the seats. The oar slid out of the rowlock and splashed into the Sound. Gene clutched vainly across the man's feet, but his hand closed on burning water. The boat broached to, helpless in the freezing atmosphere.

The boy's sea experience told him what the rescue of that oar meant, and his face went deadly white as he turned and eyed the sprawling man.

"That was a bonehead trick, you landlubber!"

It started to snow in earnest; great flakes floated down through the misty ceiling, like giant dust shaken from hidden rafters. They struck the slate-colored Sound and melted, but those that landed within the lifeboat blotched white the flooring and seats and crew. The white spots grew into crude figures and merged, and finally hid everything as under a bright furry robe.

"How am I going to get ashore?" asked the man.

He had picked himself up and was sitting by Gene. Together they had been watching the burial of the boat's woodwork.

"I, I don't know, sir," replied Gene, gravely. "I've been trying to think out a way to get this

lady ashore. Ah! I wish Pa were here. He'd know how to do it. I don't, and unless we're picked up soon," he added in an awed little voice, "we're going to freeze—die right here, Mister."

The girl heard and her eyes went wild with horror.

"I won't die," she shouted hoarsely, "not like him. Not like that steward. Not that awful way," and half to herself: "Ah! God, I can't die now in the state I'm in. I can't."

"Keep quiet, woman, you annoy me," said the man brusquely.

But Gene raised his hand.

"There, there, lady. If we gotta meet it, we gotta. Pa always said it was the easiest an' the best way out."

"You don't understand," raged Miss Madison hopelessly, flinging the lighted ship lantern from her lap. It hissed and was swallowed up. "I'm in no state—no state to meet Him. O Sacred Heart of Jesus, don't let me!"

The boy touched the visor of his cap at the Name, and said: "I was to Confession the First Friday with Pa; so I ain't really, truly afraid. Ain't you a Catholic, Mister?"

"I! What a question!"

"Then I wouldn't care to be you," said Gene, and stiff as he was he clambered back to the girl's side.

"But you are?" he asked chummily, looking into the frightened eyes. "I seen that Sacred Heart Badge you got pinned inside your jacket, when you wanted your handkerchief." She did not heed him till he repeated: "Ain't you?"

“Yes,” she whispered, flushing, and had to drop her eyes under the pure gaze. “God help me, I was.” She corrected herself. “I am.”

“Then why can’t you meet Him, as you said? Ain’t you got His Badge on? Mine’s sewed to me shirt.”

The flush deepened on the girl’s cheek.

“Because”—she hesitated—“because I haven’t a white garment on.” Seeing the puzzled face below, she explained: “I wasn’t to Confession before the First Friday, nor before many a First Friday.” And the terror came and stood in her eyes again.

She looked out into the steel barrier of fog and dropping snow and her fingers spasmodically clasped and loosened.

The man facing them had resumed his despairing posture, head sunk in crouched shoulders, and to Gene he looked as one fallen into a deep sleep. It was coldly still and the boy caught himself watching the steamy breathing of the sleeper.

But though Gene saw him, his mind was busy elsewhere. Miss Madison’s last words struck him as stingingly as the beads of spray that now, unchecked, scattered over the gunwale. How could he help her? As a true captain, he had to.

He fought the sleepy feeling as he thought and thought.

And as he watched the girl’s hands work stiff as a doll’s, there came to his mind, like the flare of a match in the dark, a promise that Sacred Heart had made, and he found himself repeating and repeating it. Why! this crying lady, who wore His protecting Badge, must be a sinner, and she’s for-

gotten what He said He'd be to all such that were sorry.

He touched the girl.

" 'Scuse me, Miss, but ain't you forgetting? 'Member what He promised sinners'd find His Heart to be? You ain't afraid to trust Him, are you?" With much effort, he lifted an unfeeling arm and nudged her. "Are you?"

She shook her head.

"Brace up then, lady, an' be a man. Make an Act of Contrition, and make it good. Here, say it with me now," and Gene commenced:

"O my God."

"O my God," faltered a weak voice.

"I'm heartily sorry."

"I'm heartily sorry." The same voice with growing confidence.

And thus litany-like, down to the twin "Amens," sounded the petition for forgiveness to "the Infinite Ocean of Mercy."

When it was silence again, the girl was weeping, but not hysterically. New strength had come to her, new strength to face what she knew must be soon. She whispered to the boy:

"Thank you, lad. You are a true captain."

"That's all right, lady," said Gene, drowsily. The effort to think had made him very weary, and he felt himself dozing.

Across the invisible waters traveled the blast of a foghorn. Gene half opened his eyes and listened. The blast was repeated louder, and now almost awake, he faced the sound. The blast was repeated closer. Softly as the approach of a cloud's shadow, save for the slap, slap of the waves

against her blunt cutwater, a schooner, with her mainsail and jib set, and her port light burning palely red in the morning air, parted the dim edge of the fog. The boy, alert to his responsibility, attempted a cry, but again the foghorn blew and the fog closed in like rich draperies and hid the schooner.

He dropped back, and he did not check the tears of failure that welled up. Later he called:

“Lady! I say, lady.” But she paid no attention. Solid she sat, and as the slight swells from the schooner rolled in and rocked the lifeboat, her body rocked as one with the boat.

Again the pleasant drowsiness crept up to the boy. He felt his soul shrinking up, inch by inch, out of his legs and arms, leaving them useless dead things. He was no longer cold. He was beyond that, and so he, like the boat, drifted, drifted.

Once again, as though in answer to a question, very sleepily, he murmured:

“Well, I done my best, and, yes, I have been a true—a true——”

“Captain,” called the Grim Angel, stooping for the last time, over the drifting lifeboat.

DORA DARE'S LAST SUCCESS

HER admirers on five continents heard with a shock of the sudden death of Miss Dora Dare. The news item, that wire and cable carried out of Los Angeles and flashed around the movie world, stated that their favorite had contracted pneumonia at Screen City, while finishing her new photoplay, "The Daughters of Diana." Of course, this news item did not mention that a priest was summoned in haste to Miss Dare's bungalow and administered the Last Sacraments shortly before she expired.

When in the course of events "The Daughters of Diana" was released, it was featured as "Dora Dare's Last Success" and in a nasty artistic sense it was.

A year after "The Daughters of Diana" first appeared, an angel of Purgatory stood by the atoning soul of Dora Dare and commanded:

"Come with me. It is in thy punishment that I must show thee a little of the world and the flesh and the other element that is in thy great sin."

The gleaming angel conducted the soul to a populous capital of a far-flung empire. Dora Dare at once recognized this city, its power fittingly symbolized by the stately bronze lions that for-

ever sniff the four winds in the square commemorating a great sea victory of that empire. They, the angel and the soul, passed into a marble movie theater and took their unseen places in the shadows of a box. Before them sat a young woman alone. This woman's attention was on the screen and Dora Dare, with new pain, recognized the photoplay. The scene showed Miss Dora Dare in her "Dance to Dives." In this dance she had, with Oriental lavishness of setting, interpreted the desirability of wealth, its tremendous power to command, and unlimited power to satisfy things earthly. As the silent dance finished and the view merged, the angel of Purgatory pointed to the young woman, who had risen from her chair. Said the angel:

"We shall follow her."

And they did, out through a baffling fog and into the cosiness of a tiny apartment, expensively plain. The young woman, just home, was seating herself at a writing desk and for many minutes she remained there, still hatted and gloved. Then, as at a signal, she drew off her glove and exposed a solitaire ring. She dallied with that, slipping it on and half off. While Dora watched and wondered, the young woman seemed to come to some definite decision, for she plucked the solitaire from her finger and sought feverishly among the pigeon holes in front of her, till she had found a jeweler's box.

She looked once at the small diamond, pure and sparkling—true token of a good man's love—and then her eyes fell upon the crumpled program she had brought from the movie theater, and she

hummed the music the orchestra had played for "The Dance to Dives." With a sigh, she pushed the engagement ring into the plush, and, wrapping up the package, addressed it to "Mr. John Spartan." Calling her maid, she ordered her to post it immediately. When the maid had left, the young woman picked up the desk phone and gave a number. After a moment she asked:

"Lord Cecil Sybarite's?"

"Yes; Miss Behan would like to speak with him, please."

Then, "Cecil?" And the young woman spoke laughingly.

This view flashed from Dora Dare's gaze like the sudden breaking of a film, and she heard the angel of Purgatory say in his wise way:

"That John Spartan was decent. As poor Lady Sybarite she will have great wealth and great misery."

"But," asked Dora, "why, why did she throw over John?"

Said her guide:

"He could only offer her a modest home and happiness."

And the angel added:

" 'Dora Dare's Last Success' preaches the wisdom of the world. Unfortunately, Miss Behan is one of a myriad who received your false lesson at a critical period."

"But, but, I never meant—" explained the soul of Dora Dare.

The angel stopped her. Then he said:

" 'The Daughters of Diana' is most successful

in teaching other, wrecking lessons. You shall see."

Again they were in a city, utterly strange to the eyes of Dora Dare. A fair and foul metropolis spread under the voluptuous warmth of a black, silver-spangled sky. Hidden tomtoms beat as unceasingly as the human heart, and plaintive reed instruments filled the night air. In from the dark waters of a warm sea blew a languid breeze, cooling somewhat the tropical heat of daylight, that still clung, like evil, to this vast city. Pagan domes and white, slender minarets lifted up above feathery palm tops. Brown-limbed natives, with painted caste marks on their foreheads, natives turbaned and fezzed and jeweled, thronged the narrow, soft-lighted roads and buzzed like bees in the brighter bazaars. Veiled shadows moved across latticed upper galleries and soft laughter floated down.

Suddenly, while Dora was still bewildered by the multi-colored life of this living, moving Arabian Nights' scene, she saw a boyish-looking man, alertly American in immaculate white and evening straw, pass in that pagan crowd. The angel made a signal and Dora understood part of her punishment was to follow this countryman of hers.

He tossed away his cigarette and turned briskly into a crowded theater compound, over the entrance of which, in blazing electric bulbs, curved the legend, "The Bombay Cinema," and to Dora's dismay, in larger letters of light, she read: "The Daughters of Diana."

Once more the angel and Dora took their unseen

places behind the seat this boyish American had chosen. It was an intermission between reels, and the lights were on. She saw this clean-cut Yankee enter into conversation with his neighbor, an aged young man, who addressed him familiarly as "Doctor Sahib." There was something instinctively unwholesome about this aged young man, with his full lips and his unquiet eyes, that repelled the chastened soul of Dora Dare.

Then the house darkened and the photoplay flickered on again. It was the fourth reel, that featured Miss Dare in her dance, her "Dance of Daphne." (It was in filming this scene that Dora Dare had contracted her fatal sickness.) The boyish American, after several glances toward the screen, dropped his eyes modestly, and once, to her delight, he made as though he would rise and leave, but the aged young man said something tauntingly, seizing his hand to detain him, and the other sank shamedly back into his seat. The native rows down in front were applauding vigorously.

"The Dance of Daphne" continued and drew toward its finale. With renewed pain Dora Dare now saw that the clean-cut American was gazing his fill at the seductive screen, and into his eyes had come something of the unquietness that offended her in the aged young man. Dora Dare cried out: "Don't. Don't, sir."

But only the angel heard her of all that still, crowded house, and he admonished her:

"Dora, you are of Purgatory, dead. It is too late for you to advise the living. Your 'Dance of Daphne' is a 'Dance of Death' to many."

Then into the voice of the angel came something of the seer, and he said, so sadly:

“This young American’s body will be found at dawn in a native road, his throat cut.”

As Dora Dare stood in horror, realizing her helplessness to avert this eternal wreck of her doing, the scene faded, faded.

And the angel was saying:

“In your great sin is also the other element. Mercifully, I am to lift this veil but for a brief moment.”

Then the angel moved nearer and he touched the soul of Dora Dare. She was beholding again, from gray ocean to blue ocean, her beloved native land. She beheld its cities straddling busy rivers, and its towns on the plains, and even its villages in valleys.

Then she was seeing in each of these centers, at once, together, the interiors of the many movie houses that were showing “Dora Dare’s Last Success.” Everywhere, among these silent audiences, like whitecaps on a troubled sea, gazed up the children: boys who were babes a few years ago and girls yet of doll age; lads and lassies in their teens; young men and many maidens.

Said the angel:

“Look well at your awful success, Dora Dare.”

And he lifted aside the veil of things so that she saw all, as though through the keen Eyes of God.

She saw that other element traveling out and out, ever out with every changing light and shadow of “The Daughters of Diana,” and down into those wondering young eyes. She saw in that long

second living evil, like some foul dew, settling on these fresh myriads of youth, and dimming their souls' radiance into gray, and grayer, and black. With a great cry, that wrenched the supports of her being, the pardoned soul of Dora Dare cried out her anguish at this true sight of her sin that had not died. And the angel of Purgatory dropped the veil.

Then he spoke:

"Dora, Our Master hath shown thee infinite mercy."

"Those children! His little ones! I did not realize!"

"You sow and those innocents reap; so farms the world," said the angel of Purgatory in sorrow.

"But I may pray," cried Dora Dare hopefully.

Then, for the second time, the welcome Gates of God's Forgiveness closed over the soul of Dora Dare.

THE OTHER BOY

“FATHER, there’s more than appendicitis the matter with that man in No. 22.” The day Sister was walking with the chaplain toward St. Stanislaus’ Ward.

“That young patient with the graying hair?” Sister nodded.

“You think physical or spiritual?” queried the priest, raising his eyebrows.

The nun clasped the white-knotted cord that hung at the side of her black habit, and started to twist it about her fingers.

“Dr. Kelvin said he might get up for a couple of hours to-day, Father. His physical condition is most satisfactory.”

“But Sister Gonzaga suspects his spiritual condition is not—eh?” Father Ryan spread out his hands, palms up. “Can I do anything? He’s not one of us, Sister—I learned this emphatically the morning after his operation. That scapular medal he wore made me make a natural mistake. However, I’ll speak to him again.” And the chaplain of St. Mary’s Hospital entered the ward on his morning rounds.

The immense room, with its two rows of white beds and their silent figures, stretched down to

where the cheery sun streamed in bright bars through the long southerly windows.

Father Ryan moved and spoke. Finally, he stopped for a brief word with the old Italian who lay, like a chiseled bit of time-worn marble, propped up in bed No. 21; and then, meeting the watching face beyond, crossed smilingly and leaned on the enameled medicine table.

“Sister tells me doctor’s going to let you up for a while to-day, Mr.—isn’t it Dundy?”

A lean hand on which the blue veins showed, lifted listlessly from the blanket and took the priest’s.

“Frank Dundy, Father. Yes. Kelvin took a look at the incision yesterday, and said I might get back on my feet for a few hours to-day.”

“Well, be careful. You’ll find yourself moving in a very wabby world at first. How long have you been in bed now?”

“Eleven or twelve days” (wearily). “One loses track lying here, Father. The life’s as dull as a Kansas prairie, and Lord knows that’s——”

“Yes; ‘horizontal days’ seem eternal, but they’re the disguised blessing sometimes. Make us think of our utter dependence on Him, who gives and takes.”

The tired light in the pale face flickered and dropped out, and in its place shot the red of pain.

“Takes? Yes, He takes.”

The man brushed back the grayish hair from his forehead as he turned on his far side, and Father Ryan noticed how boyish, yet old, the profile on the pillow seemed. He checked his impulse to move away, and said sympathetically:

“We all have sad memories, Mr. Dundy.”

After a quiet minute the priest picked up and toyed with the empty tumbler on the stand.

From the Children's Room, just off the ward, came a shriek; a deeper silence, and a shrill:

“Oh, it hurts, Doctor! It h-u-r-ts!”

The patient turned back to the priest suddenly.

“It's that I can't stand, or understand—children's suffering. They've done nothing to deserve it. It's different, perhaps, with grown-ups; but innocent kids—no.”

“Oh, it h-u-r-ts!” rang high again. “Doctor, oh!—oh!”

Dundy's teeth clicked like a sprung trap and he quivered.

“That's that boy with the infected knee. They're probing.” Then he continued bitterly: “Yes, Father; ‘horizontal days,’ as you call them, compel one to think many thoughts. This is my first taste of hospital life, and these sick-a-bed days have driven it home to me that” (bitterly) “an all-tender and all-loving God, such as you and the other sects picture, does not shade in with the facts.”

Seeing the pitying expression on the chaplain, he stopped.

“Pardon, Father! I didn't mean to speak so frankly. Kids' sufferings always rile me. You see, I had to stand by helplessly and see my little son die a year ago; and with his going” (he tossed his head) “went any belief in an ‘Old Home Week’ celebration after the cemetery. Hope I haven't offended. Never meant to—but here comes the day nurse after my pulse and temperature.” He

stretched out a dismissing hand. "I'd like very much to believe as you do, sir; and if anything would make me shut my eyes to facts, and leap at Catholic beliefs, it's your doctrine of meeting the dead, our dead, again. But good-morning, Father!—Good-morning, Miss Miller!"

The chaplain drew near the Children's Room, and, as he passed out of the ward, looked back at bed No. 22, where the trim young person, in fresh blue and white, was gazing at her watch and holding the wrist of the motionless man.

Wise Father Ryan murmured:

"'My little son'! So that's the cross that's crushed this nice young fellow!" And he jotted down a mental note to give him a special intention in his next day's Mass.

Dundy was glad to stretch down limply into the fresh sheets after his few hours up, and resume his watch on the passing day. He now knew every link in the chain from night to night—the daylight strong on that red brick house with the stone facings across the street; the restlessness of waking patients, and breakfast; the chattering of children hurrying in the street below, and the deep school bell that broke it off; then the day Sister's visit, and her kindly words; and the coming of the fussy interns, dressed as though for a set of tennis, and their loud-voiced commands. And occasionally an orderly, all in white, would lead a bath-robed figure by the bed of Dundy; and hours later there would sound, growing louder, the clack, clack of the carriage, on which lay the same figure, now still and under a blanket; and soon the

sicky-sweet ether smell would fill the whole apartment.

Then the lame telephone boy, with his bundle of papers and mail, would enter, and leave empty-handed; and the convalescents would nod and drag by on their way to where the potted palms swayed by the warm windows. Dundy could hear the half circle forever describing their complaints, and the hush that would fall on them when the imperative gong of the ambulance sounded in the yard.

Then he would read and read, down to the last "ad"; and be interrupted by the smiling nurse setting his dinner tray at his elbow. And always while he was eating, a full-throated bell would boom out from the tower on the corner, and Sister Gonzaga would stop and stand recollected for a moment and finger her beads. Then he slept, and awoke as visitors crowded in noisily for the afternoon hour. After that, quiet again, the creeping shadows, supper; the short evening, the new nurse making her rounds, the grateful gloom of the night lights, and then every kind of breathing.

Such was the ward cycle as Dundy learned to know it while his incision healed, and he told time by these regularly; but to-night something unusual was happening.

The night Sister, with the wisp of a brogue and the German name that he could never remember, stopped long over his neighbor; and, instead of passing on to his side, called the orderly; and he brought the long, white screen, and together they set it up about the bed of the old Italian, shutting him out from the gaze of the ward. Twice during the night, half awake, Dundy thought he heard

voices; and once the click, click of the carriage. Next morning he turned on his left side and saw the long, white screen was gone and there was a stripped bed. When Sister Gonzaga came he asked her about his neighbor, and she said:

“Yes, the poor old man is safe and happy now with God and all his own. He was a last leaf. Sister Berengaria found him low, and when Father arrived the body was still warm, and he anointed him. So they come and go home, Mr. Dundy.”

The day Sister started to move toward the Children's Room.

“Sister, give my regards to young ‘Infected Knee’ and the other kids. How are they this morning?”

“The three are doing nicely,” she answered. “But there's a very sick boy who was brought in last evening.” She saw the interested eyes. “You like children; don't you, Mr. Dundy?”

“Yes—that is, boys,” said Dundy, distinguishing his reply. “I have reason to. My Francie would have been ten, day after to-morrow.” And he was silent.

When the sun was high and he had dressed, he asked Sister Gonzaga if he might visit the Children's Room.

“Why, certainly, Mr. Dundy.” And she went with him, walking slowly, and said from the threshold: “Boys, here's the gentleman who's been sending regards to you.”

Dundy smiled on the suddenly solemn cribs; but the silence did not long continue in the square, bright room, which looked on the blinding snow-

packed street. For Frank Dundy knew the little traveled path to the boy heart, and soon there were laughter and chatter again.

“Mac, old man,” he asked of the six-year-old whose wizened face and nice teeth appeared above the bars of the far crib, “Sister told me there were four sick boys. I see only three, and”—quizzingly—“none of them appears fatally ill. Where’s the really and truly sick boy?”

“He was in that empty crib by the steampipes,” volunteered Tommie, whose infected knee kept him on the broad of his back—a disadvantage he remedied by craning his neck.

“But that nurse put him in there after the doctors came and seen him,” “Mac” completed the sentence by pointing across the hallway.

But Dundy was not listening. He had heard, coming from the room at his back, the troubled voice of a lad, calling; and the strangely familiar voice thrilled him.

“That’s fine, Mac!” he said distractedly. “I’m going to leave you fellows now—mustn’t stay too long on a first visit, but I’ll come again,” said the convalescent, as he waved a farewell hand and closed the door.

The opposite door stood ajar. He pushed it back on its hinges, and found himself looking into a small high room, that was painted a soothing green halfway up the walls.

In the bed, and staring at the far ceiling, was the *very* sick boy. Above the tossed brown hair, like a jaunty Tam O’Shanter, rested an ice cap; but it was the full brown eyes, the brown skin, and the half-open baby lips that held Dundy as in a

wise. For the face above the blanket was, feature for feature, the face he had seen for the final time when he looked through the screen of his little son's coffin.

Dundy, his finger nails cutting into the palms of his hands, neared the bed and gazed down. Long and hungrily he looked on this other boy—or was it his own Francie dying again?

Blinded, he turned away to peer into the bleak hospital yard, where by the bare trees stood the shrine of the Lady and the Babe. He knew whom the group represented: it was the Mother and her Son to whose care his gasping wife had confided their Francie. And, then, three months later the rosy boy, who had stood frightened and clinging to his hand as the earth rattled on her box, lay under the next mound, and he had come away, a lonely old man of thirty-five. Ah, broken and dark and Godless had been the last twelve months!

“Oh, here you are, Mr. Dundy! Sister was wondering what had become of you.”

The man wheeled about and blinked at Miss Miller.

“Yes; I was talking to the kids there,” he nodded across the hallway; “and I heard this little lad speak.”

“Poor boy! He's in bad shape.”

Miss Miller was tying a large white apron over her blue-and-white-uniform.

“What is it?”

“Typhoid I thought when they brought him in last night—been having sharp headaches for a week at home—but doctor says tubercular meningitis, and that's”—

She did not finish, but there was no need. Dundy knew.

The nurse had her protecting apron tied.

“Frank!” she called, lifting the feverish head and patting the hot pillows into shape. “Frank, how are you feeling?”

There was no answer, but the flushed face dropped back and the eyes closed. She straightened the ice cap.

“Frank? Is that his name,” softly inquired the man at the foot of the bed; and he started as the boy flung a curved arm over his head—a gesture he well remembered.

“Yes: Frank—Francis—oh, I forget!” Miss Miller reached for the chart that hung on the wall. “Here it is.”

Dundy checked her.

“Don’t, Miss, please. I’d rather not hear the last name.”

She looked at him curiously, then began to smooth the blankets.

The boy before them moaned, and in a querulous voice cried:

“Pa, pa! I say, pa!” And the wide brown eyes opened to the ceiling, and, glancing down, rested full on the tense face of Dundy.

“He’s been that way, calling and talking, all night.—Frankie, Frankie, go to sleep now. That’s a good boy!—Poor little fellow, I think he’s going to—”

But suddenly the nurse found herself alone in the room with the delirious boy.

Long after the ward had been shrouded in the dim light that the frosted electrics cast, the patient

in No. 22 lay with wide eyes; and when dreams did come, they were of a little lad of ten, who now lay tossing in a white crib, and now forever still in a white-clothed coffin.

Father Ryan, as he passed on his morning rounds, saw that Mr. Dundy was sleeping; but, returning from the Children's Room, he heard his name called.

"Father, how is that very sick boy in the small room?"

"The little chap's conscious, but low, Mr. Dundy. I've just heard his confession. If he's as well as this to-morrow, I'll let him make his First Communion." The chaplain recalled his conversation of the other morning, and he added: "You know what I mean?"

"Yes: my wife and little son were both Catholics."

Then the priest understood what had loosened the tongue of this patient. He hesitated at first to speak of the mysteriously wise ways of God to one who had told him he disbelieved; but afterward he was glad he did so. And all through his daily duties Father Ryan carried before him the picture of this hungry, lonely soul, and he wondered what designs Our Lord had in bringing together Frank Dundy and the double of his little son.

Sister Gonzaga found a thoughtful invalid when she came to No. 22 to tell him he might get up. And she thought it well to warn him not to go near the very sick boy, for his disease was contagious.

Dundy assured her he would keep away from the small room, but he sent the orderly out for

large oranges and carried three to the Children's Room. After his return he sat with the convalescents down by the sunlight and the palms, and listened to all their troubles, though he did not tell them his own.

Back to an early bed and his memories, the desire came, strong and persistent as a flood tide, to see this other boy make what the chaplain had called, "his First Communion." He remembered his little Francie's face the morning the lad had come home with his mother after his First Communion, and how he had stooped down and reverently kissed the glowing upturned face. So during the afternoon he stopped the day Sister and asked permission to see the very sick boy "receive." Listening, Sister Gonzaga balanced the spiritual gain against the physical risk, and she said she would call him in time.

"Sister says you may get up now, Mr. Dundy; and when you're dressed come to the small isolation cell," commanded Miss Miller, as she took away his breakfast tray.

Dundy found Sister Gonzaga arranging a low table, covered with an immaculate cloth, on which stood candles and a crucifix and a glass, half full of water, and by it a spoon. She put her finger to her lips, then pointed to a chair between the foot of the bed and the greenish wall. When she had everything ready she called:

"Frank!"

"Yes, Sister!" said a wee tired voice—such a voice as the man in the chair only too well remembered.

"Frank, Father will be here very soon now, and you know Whom he's bringing?"

"Yes, Sister," said the same voice.

"Well, then, close your eyes till Father comes. You're comfortable?"

"Yes, Sister."

Sister Gonzaga pulled up the snowy counterpane and tucked it in; then she came and whispered to the observing man:

"He's very weak—possibly this First Communion is Viaticum—but, thank God, quite conscious! I envy the little fellow, don't you? Just think! Soon the long siege of pain will be forever over and he'll go straight to heaven, and who knows what evils the future might have held for him? I'll be back in a little while." And she half closed the door.

When the day Sister's footsteps ceased in the ward, Dundy got up quietly and turned toward the resemblance on the pillow. It was very still in the little room.

"'Straight to heaven, and who knows what evils the future might have held for him?'" said Dundy to himself; and he repeated: "Straight to heaven."

A shrill bell sounded from St. Stanislaus' Ward, and grew louder. Sister Gonzaga hurried in and lit the candles; then she knelt and bent low as the shrill bell jingled in the hallway. There was a tramp of feet, and Dundy caught a glimpse of a round-faced boy in red and white; and after him the priest, with a long silk and gold veil across his shoulders, the ends laid over his clasped hands.

Father Ryan, noticing no one in the room,

walked to the stand and stooped. When he straightened, he faced the sick boy, and the man in the chair heard him murmuring something in Latin, and saw his right hand rise and descend, at which the kneeling nun made the Sign of the Cross. Then the priest picked up most reverently a white Particle from among those that lay in the open silver box, and again he faced Frank, and this time Sister rose, and, putting her arm under the boy's shoulder, lifted him slightly. The priest bent over the bed and placed on the outstretched tongue what looked to the man like a tiny half moon, then Sister withdrew her arm, the head dropped back into the pillow, and Dundy heard the shrill bell growing fainter and fainter.

"You may sit here a while, or go back to St. Stanislaus'," said Sister Gonzaga, in a low tone, as she carried the still smoking candles away with her.

Frank Dundy chose the former; for this sight of a First Communion had warmed him through and through. His eyes kept going to the young face with the closed eyes, that looked suddenly mature and completely satisfied. And as he stood again, clasping the cold iron of the foot of the bed, and deep in his memories of another last bed, there came to him the truth, as convincing as a visible thing, that *this* was the entrance to a greater life, a real life; and that his own Francie had but gone before, and that he still lived. With this conviction strong upon him, the father looked down at the still countenance, and then up, and he whispered:

“My Francie—my own Francie, meet and welcome this namesake; will you, boy?”

His lips ceased, and he felt as though his soul stood at the end of blackness, and faced a thin door, under which escaped the glow of a mighty light. He knew he no longer groped in the despairing dark: his eyes had been touched and he saw.

He looked again enviously on the quiet lids below him, then ever so softly tiptoed to the door and closed it after him. His heart was too full of his new knowledge to visit the Children's Room, but in the hallway he stopped and murmured:

“O God of little boys, God of my Francie, I do believe!”

And at that moment on the borders of a fair kingdom a bewildered little boy was being clasped and welcomed by a brighter counterpart, who kept repeating:

“O Frankie, it was you—you brought Faith to my father!”

MUCH FRUIT

IT WAS toward evening of this seventeenth century day when the Black Robe and his Anacostan guide entered the strange ravine. A grove of ancient beeches threw a grayish tinge across the trail, and between the lacery of leafless branches mosaics of an autumn day showed. Something more than these favorite color combinations in this blue and gray dale gently drew the Black Robe's attention. It was as though this utterly new bit of wilderness, leading to the Piscatoway village, were familiar grounds, and he had suddenly walked into a dear haunt of boyhood. Old, dear memories of distant woods of his own estate and happy autumn tramps; a feeling of God and His holy ones flooded the missionary's heart. He forgot his savage destination and his companion to surrender himself to this sense of unearthly peace.

Up the side of this homelike ravine a bird called, shrill and long. Even to the civilized ears of the Black Robe the note jarred upon the woody setting, and he looked sharply at the Anacostan. His painted guide with a warning grunt stopped the priest's steps and loosening his knife glided into the tangled silence ahead. Quickly the gray silent beeches hid him in their depths.

The Anacostan did not return. Once the same shrill bird called again and the silences grew stiller, broken occasionally by the scamperings of the gray squirrels and the dropping of burs into the dead leaves.

At length, the stillness drove the missionary up the narrow trail alone.

He had climbed scarcely an hundred yards, when at a turn, amid the withered leaves of a tall beech, he found his Christian Indian with gaping side lying quite motionless. Stooping to absolve conditionally, the missionary saw the black scalp lock was missing.

The Black Robe was trembling when he straightened again. The quiet ravine had become ominous; the shadows, fearsome. Pagan eyes, that held no love for such messages as he bore, watched from the deepening shadows. But he had come far and he must go farther. He had glad tidings to announce to those unenlightened souls in the village of the Piscatoways, and even though he could not reach them, he would try.

Despite a trembling, over which he had scant control, the Black Robe left the poor disfigured body there in the stained leaves and started up this strangely familiar ravine.

His hand sought the crucifix at his side and as he touched strength, a verse from his breviary flashed up in his mind. He repeated the lines half aloud, "Unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But—"

The Black Robe never finished these words of his Master. For as he walked erect, his eyes fixed on the blue sky, an evil shadow crept from behind

a giant gray bole. There was a quick pain in his head and the trail struck him violently. The shadow that had moved became a lithe, bronzed figure of paint and feathers. Noiselessly as a leopard alights, it dropped on his shoulders. The Black Robe felt a new, fierce fire circle the crown of his head. He murmured his Blessed Master's Name as the pain became unbearable. Then all sense of torture ceased.

It was moonlight, brilliant, cold moonlight, when the Black Robe revived. A cool-nosed animal was nozzling him and it crashed away into the night when he stirred. He sat up like a Dying Gaul, and the silvered world of beeches danced fantastically about him. He thought he was in one of Dante's forests. Soon he remembered aright, and the dance of the ancient beeches was joyous, sedate. To his imagination the beeches beyond it reared up into the heavens like dark olive trees, and as he rested he repeated aloud: "Geth-semani!"

Like some awkward animal, he attempted to crawl up the ravine toward the watching beeches. Pain and thirst and numbness strove like determined demons to hold him back.

On hands and knees, he came to dark water that hurried across the trail. He would have dropped his head into this welcome barrier and wetted his parched lips. He realized the touch of this little brook would be balm to the circle of pain atop his head. But a nobler thought came and he uttered thickly: "Cedron, the Brook Cedron," and went on with dry lips.

Beyond the stream he crawled into moonlight again, and the ravine led steeply up. Always the branches of the ancient beeches beckoned, inviting him to follow them up the hill. Something holy within him urged him to accept. It took him hours, from beech to beech, with great periods of exhaustion, when his face sank into the wet leaves. At times he prayed aloud bits of his breviary. At times, the Holy Name, repeated with each labored breathing, was all he was able to ejaculate. All the way up, the gray beeches of this friendly ravine guided him, supported him, encouraged him.

The darkness that precedes the dawn found the Black Robe out of this ravine and on the top of a hill, where a cool breeze blew.

“God’s will!” said the Black Robe, and he sank down at the base of a mighty beech and surrendered himself to exhaustion. With head pillowed against the strong friendly tree, the Black Robe looked about him. Night was nearly over. Below him in the first still lights of dawn, a placid river circled darkly into the south around a black forested island. He knew this broad stream was the River of Swans—Cohonguroton, as the Anacostans called it. A canoe on its bosom could have borne him swiftly down to St. Mary’s City and the aid of friends, but he realized gladly that was not to be. He was looking on his last horizons.

The gray light strengthened in the east, and he turned to gaze dreamily over the quiet rolling landscape to the blue hills beyond.

This vista started another chain of thoughts, and he found himself looking out across the years

of his life. The brief, arduous months in The Colony since he had left the deck of "The Dove." The busy professor years at cloistered St. Omer's and his constant dream of carrying God's learning across the Western Ocean. The happy novitiate in eternal Rome, when he had first dreamed his dream.

The pale Black Robe spanned his past into that bright Oxford day of the long ago, when Faith had touched his eyes and he had made the sacrifice of title and acres in Kent. Contentedly he saw his dream was not to be. It was to lie with him here in this strangely friendly ravine.

Then out of the great beech over his head a small prickly bur fell beside him and his hand closed over it. Again the verse he had been praying when he was ambushed came into the Black Robe's mind, and he recited it slowly with long pauses, "Unless the grain of wheat—falling into the ground—die—itself remaineth alone. But if it—die——"

While the day strengthened about him he meditated the ending of that sentence, and suddenly its meaning rose upon him blindingly like the sun across the sea.

Fighting off the strong weakness that was embracing him; rather, emboldened with the courage of the one who has conquered and now claims his reward exceedingly great, the Black Robe strove to form his last words. He gazed about him on this autumn scene—this hill that banked the placid river and below into the friendly ravine with its groves of gaunt, gray beech and the dark blue western sky above them. The words of his last

wish came faintly. His head dropped back contentedly against the great gray bole, and with happy effort he closed his eyes.

Or had he closed his eyes, for the last lingering shadows of night were speeding away. Gray outlines under a fair blue heaven were shaping themselves.

Noon and summer had come overquickly, and the autumn dawn of wilderness about the Black Robe gave them place. Beech shaded walks led down into the friendly ravine, and on their way passed reverently the place of his agony, where now in green-mounded rows the holy dead slept.

Upon this hill gray outlines grew more distinct, and from them emerged long gray walls and slim towers against a serene sky. Set in smooth shaven lawns, this noble pile of buildings of unfamiliar architecture overlooked a mighty city, where in the distance a great white dome and a needle of sheer granite appeared.

Here above the friendly ravine a gray university arose, majestic as any the Black Robe had ever seen in old Europe; and out of its portals came the youth of a new, splendid race. They passed down from this hill of their Alma Mater into the mighty city and out beyond into other cities and the world.

And yet arose other gray buildings, and countless youths came and learnt and passed out to valiant deeds. Into new centuries the Black Robe was permitted to gaze upon this realization of his last wish, and what he saw was pleasant.

Then the light of those distant days faded, and the shadows of this early morning returned. To

the Black Robe, pains and weariness were as things forgotten; contentment and great gratitude claimed him as their very own.

Once more over the beeches of his friendly ravine he did repeat, as a parting benediction, the words, “—itself remaineth alone. But if it die——” With his last strength the Black Robe sang the ending of this verse as a paeon of thanksgiving to Him who now approached. “But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit!”

THE TRUE BLUE STAR

SHE purchased the flag, returning from the station that sunny June evening, when she and the sky were of the same hue. Again in the home, where to every room clung his memory, she had carefully picked out the stitches that held the star. Afterward, adding a red and white Badge, she had sewed them back into place on the white field and smoothed out the bulge with a hot iron. With a sharp intake of breath that stirred the flag, she had herself hung it in the very center of the tiny parlor window, where its blue star bore witness to the passing street. Then, during the long afternoons, when some of her friends came sighing and consoling, she had silenced them with her invariable anecdote.

“I said to Sammie, the night war came, ‘Son, are you going to wait to be drafted?’ And he said to me, stooping over, ‘Mother, how can I? I enlisted this afternoon.’ And I said, ‘Sam, you only did your duty, and no harm will befall you, because I’m placing you under a real Magic Coat.’ ”

Somehow the consolers and the sighers ceased to trouble Mrs. Howard.

Nevertheless, the day his last hasty line came from Mineola, gloating that his next letter would

come from "Over There Land," she had turned the Statue on the mantelpiece till the kindly eyes must look directly at the blue star. And she had told her daughter Mary, very determinately, that hereafter she herself would fill and trim and keep alight the small lamp that cast its reddish glow up the robes of the Statue, up to the Sacred Heart.

Then, through the letterless days, she knitted sleeveless jerseys that would only fit a certain broad chest, and while her fingers toiled tirelessly, her thoughts would stay out on the long blue curve that led to France. So she tried, while she knitted and prayed, to practise her dear father's constant maxim, "Keep a stiff upper lip." And she always turned a smiling face to Mary; for young shoulders find the bearing of the burden hard.

Well she remembered how her own mother had smiled through the tense fortnight after Gettysburg, when her father's name was on no list, and how her mother's face suddenly aged, when the news came that he was unwounded and promoted. Now, with the seeming flip of a half century, she was the mother and Mary the daughter, and instead of father in blue, this time it was her own olive-drab son.

Then, one rainy morning, when she was unable to go the three squares to 6.30 Mass at the Sacred Heart Church, came a brief, censor-stamped card from nowhere, saying "I have arrived safely over seas" and everything was "*très bien, ma mère.*" She had laughed. It was so like Sam to air any new accomplishment.

Later in the day, as Mary was leaving for the Red Cross, she stopped before the hallway mirror

to adjust her hat, and through the half-open curtains caught her mother standing before the framed photograph that held the place of honor in the tiny parlor. Coming up softly behind her, she heard the murmured, "In Thee I trust." And she noticed the puckered, trembling lips. The thought struck Mary, as she rolled the white yards at the meeting, that an ounce of a mother's preventive prayers might outweigh a curative pound of these bandages.

Then within the month, like a burst of shrapnel, came the telegram. Mary had answered the ring, certain it was a message announcing the time of Aunt Mamie's train. She had lightly signed the boy's book and had called out:

"Stop your everlasting knitting, old dear, and hear the news. It's from Auntie. You open it."

And her mother had pulled down her spectacles and cut the yellow edge with her scissors.

"I suppose it's the 10:02. You will have to go, as that's my Red Cross hour."

Then her mother was smiling heavily and she got up and said:

"Daughter."

Mary, startled, had followed the older woman into the silent parlor before the lighted Statue. And here her mother had said:

"Kneel, dear."

She showed Mary the open face of the dispatch. It offered the Department's sympathy and regretted to report to the next of kin: "Private Samuel Howard killed in action."

Somehow, Father Scully learned at once, (many of the telegraph girls were of the Sacred Heart

Parish) and his mere presence was strength. But next day when *The Sun* blazed out the town's first hero, privacy departed. School children lingered in the street, and strangely silent for them, were held fascinated by the blue star in the parlor window, which had taken on a new dignity. And taller folks could see somewhere back in the room, the reddish glow of a faithful lamp that burnt by day and by night.

There was one young reporter who came with a request, and because he looked somewhat like Sam—the same clear blue eyes, and deep bronze cheek, and deep dimple in his chin—succeeded in persuading the mother to let her picture be taken. So she watched him with hungry eyes, while he nimbly draped a flag against the wall. Thus was she taken. This photo was copied even in the big dailies. Thousands in Atlantic and inland and coast cities looked on this cut of the small black satin figure, standing serenely against the striped and starred wall, and it caused many a mother to feel a tightening of her heart-strings.

Yet to Mary, her mother seemed at times to act as though she were puzzled, even hurt. It was not the crushing silence of grief, the shock of sudden overwhelming disaster, but rather the startled stillness of a child, whose dearest trust has been betrayed. This troubled Mary.

One afternoon Reverend Mother came over from the Convent with an enormous spiritual bouquet. Masses, Communions, beads, and a regiment of acts of mortification, that the Parochial School children had promised to offer for Sam. As the two talked of his school days and the all around

model he had been, a troubleless, toilsome, faithful, combination youthful genius and boy saint, Mary could not help recalling some of the more painful interviews she, as sister to Saint Genius, had had with Reverend Mother. But being a child of this generation, she sat silent, or contributed a rare bouquet. Finally Reverend Mother produced a tissue-papered bundle, and said:

“Dear Mrs. Howard, I’ve spoken to Father Scully and he enthusiastically approves. This is a part of an old chasuble, and the Sisters were thinking that you would care to replace that blue star in the flag,” her hand swept toward the window, “with this one. You have a right, you know.”

She unwrapped a star of thick cloth of gold. Again Mary noticed, as her mother accepted, and thanked Reverend Mother, that hurt betrayal-of-trust look.

When they were alone, Mary offered to exchange the stars, but her mother stopped her, saying:

“No, daughter; that’s my work, if it’s to be done.”

So Mary went back to her desk in the dining room to acknowledge letters.

Mrs. Howard got her basket—the old brown shellac work-box, out of which had come the thread and needles to patch and darn countless young clothes. The work-box shook as she recalled that such service would not be needed again.

Then she gently took the Service Flag out of the window. Whitebearded Doctor MacFarland, passing in his machine, slowed to tip his hat to the mother, and she saw his car swerve as he

rolled along. Doctor had met Sam on his arrival twenty-two years ago.

With the flag on her arm, the mother turned to the Statue, and almost before she knew it, she was saying:

“Ah! In Thee I trusted!”

But looking at the exposed Heart, she gently amended:

“In Thee I trust.”

And she went up to the back bedroom that had been his.

Here, in the low morris chair, she sat, laying the brown work-box on the floor.

She held up the small silk flag and the thought struck her for the first time, that the blue star on the white field were the colors of our Lady, and the red border, the sacred color of her Son. Surely, he should have had double protection! She remembered the time, just entering his teens, when Sam had gone so low with pneumonia, here in this very bed, and Father Scully had come with the Holy Oils; and how, as she expressed it, she had “emptied a street in Purgatory” with her prayers that he might not be taken. And well she recalled the evening of the First Friday, when the crisis had been successfully passed, and Sam slept. That night she had especially consecrated her only son. Her hand had reached the blue star, and as she fingered it, she suddenly remembered the reason of its thickness. She looked up at the blurred window, flooded with the dying gold, and said:

“And when I put him specially under Your protection. It isn’t like You!”

Then her eyes rested on the cloth of gold star that Mother Ambrose had just given her to replace this blue one. And she wondered should she make the exchange. Wouldn't it be a kind of lack of trust? She dropped the stars into her lap, where they lay side by side. The blue for the living, and the gold, the symbol of one who had given life that others might live. Long she mused. Later she picked up the flag and with her scissors began to cut the threads that held the blue star on the white field.

As the points came up, there appeared underneath, the red and white Badge she had placed there the day Sam had departed with his regiment to join the Rainbow Division. Gazing on that thorn-girded Heart aflame, she burst out:

"This is the only time You have ever failed me. It's hard to believe it!"

And then loyally she stopped. She cut away slowly the threads that held, and this time her thoughts lingered consolingly on the immense Spiritual Bouquet, the children of the Parochial School had offered for her Sam, and it was balm to know how those many young prayers would expedite his passage through that other helpless No Man's Land.

Four blue points of the star were free, and she had started her scissors under the last point, when she heard the door-bell ring, and Mary move below to answer it. A boy's shrill voice sounded, she did not recognize the voice, and the front door banged closed. It was intensely still in the hallway. Then, suddenly, Mary began screaming.

Mrs. Howard rose hastily, upsetting the work-box. She heard:

“Mother! Mother, where are you?”

Mary came racing up the stairs. The next instant she flashed into the bedroom, a yellow telegram in her hand.

“O mother! Sam—a cable mistake—he has been made a Sergeant!”

Mrs. Howard crushed the blue star and the protecting Badge to her bosom, crying:

“O Heart! That I ever doubted You!”

THIS NIGHT

“DADDY, that’s the third time you’ve yawned, and you know it ain’t polite.”

“Ain’t?” Judge Foole put down his legal magazine and twisted on the deep cushioned seat with mock seriousness.

“Isn’t,” came in a chastened voice. And later, “I think you’re an awfully mean Daddy.”

The Judge looked straight ahead through the heavy glass, beyond the uniformed shoulders of the chauffeur, to the black William Penn atop of City Hall, that loomed increasingly bigger as they rolled down Broad, but a penitent hand reached sideways and was clasped forgivingly by a smaller one.

“Daddy’s been working hard lately, earning certain folk’s bread and butter, and he’s pretty tired, Gladie, but soon he’s going to take a long rest. He’s going to eat, and he’s going to drink, and he’s going to be—.” He never finished.

The car swerved violently to the right, and bumped the curb; a whitefaced man on the sidewalk glued himself into a doorway, and as Judge Foole grabbed his tiny daughter to his breast, he saw a heavy limousine back swiftly out of the parked line in the center of the street and strike

a dingy jitney ahead. In a spray of flying particles—glass windshields have that defect—the lighter jitney crumpled, then turned, and a shirt-waisted girl, who had been in the jitney, lay under the whir of the motor.

Mercifully the Judge covered his daughter's eyes, and held her down till Connor had backed the car into the street again and out of the ever-increasing crowd. He patted Gladys' head, whispering assuring nothings, and would not let her up till his machine had swung into Spring Garden Street, and was passing the massive, granite-columned Mint.

"Daddy, my hair's all mussed up, and you did it too! Why, Daddy, your face's as white as anything!"

Judge Foole lay back on the cushions, hand pressed on heart, and spoke little till his car was in Arch Street and stopping before Gladys' school.

"Daughter will have something to tell Madam Neiman, if late." He pushed open the door, "Now, don't keep Jack and myself waiting, when we come this afternoon. Circus in town you know, Gladie."

He kissed his daughter warmly and watched her disappear within the shelter of the gray stone Academy of the Sacred Heart, and then it was he let himself relax.

"That still girl might have been my Gladie—or me. Close call, that!"

But once in his high law office, that commanded a view down restless Market Street, the duties of the day came, and with them a forgetfulness of the warning of the morning.

He went over the papers in the Leahan case and, except in one minor point—where he penciled his objection in the margin—approved his partner's line of argument. The plump office boy knocked, and silently laid a batch of the morning mail at his elbow, and Judge Foole skillfully sorted the pile, flipping the ads and circulars unopened into the wastebasket. He stopped his examination and reached for the silver dagger of a paper cutter, as he came to a heavy envelope, with "U. S. Senate" engraved in blue upon it. With rapid, nervous jerks his eyes zigzagged down the type-written lines that pledged the senior Senator of Pennsylvania's support in the coming municipal election.

"Then it's 'My Honor, the Mayor,' " said the Judge to himself, for well he knew what the political support of "Boss" White was equivalent to. The phone rang, and he was telling Fox—young Frank X. Fox, of Fox & Welsh, Real Estate—that he had decided to accept their client's offer and take that ocean-front cottage in Chelsea. "\$38,000 cash. Yes; that was the consideration," and the check was theirs as soon as the deed was made out.

The Judge made a memorandum and filed it in the "Personal" pigeonhole of his littered desk.

"I've wanted that site for years, and now it's mine. This fall, after the election, I'll pull down that old shack and put up the classiest cottage in Chelsea. Dirt cheap too! That property's bound to appreciate; yea, double in value in three years.

"As soon as Sea-edge Park is put through,"

he whispered to the small, plaster Billiken, that squatted upon a mass of bright colored time-tables. The Judge smiled and winked at the solemn Baby God of Luck, for he was in a position to know some future municipal plans that had been approved by the invisible government of Chelsea.

Then Judge Foole stood his confidant on top of his desk and busied himself routing the rest trip to the Coast, Mother and Gladys and himself would make next month, and he was just spreading out a gaudy Frisco folder, that showed a summer girl under a tall palm gazing at the bluest of Pacifics, when his private office door burst open and the judge knew who was in the room. When he had disengaged the cyclone that circled his neck, he heard:

“Daddy, I got the camp kit. It’s a beaut. Khaki trousers, six pairs; two gray Army blankets; a peach of a poncho, that won’t leak.—The man guaranteed it.—An’ some swell shirts, an’ two pairs of real moccasins, made by New York State Indians, and a canoe paddle—I bet it don’t break like that bum one I had last year—and, Daddy, will you look at this pippin!” and the breathless Jack produced a practical-looking, many-bladed knife.

The Judge amusedly took the tool of destruction from his son’s hand and read the Scout motto, that was impressed on the bulky knife’s side.

“‘Be prepared,’ hey, Jack. That’s good advice for anyone. But,” knowing the ways of his Jack, he added seriously, “boy, let me catch any blade of this—this Devil’s Advocate, open at home and

it's no Camp Columbus' will see you this summer."

He gazed again at the bone-handled instrument, that lay at peace in his palm. "So, Jack, my son, keep it under cover till you cross the Delaware, or 'Be prepared' for an all summer job in my outer office."

"All right, Dad." Jack pocketed his treasure, and importantly reached into his hip pocket. "But, Daddy, I didn't show you the best of all yet," and he brought forth a shiny blue-black Iver Johnson automatic.

Jack's eyes were shining with new ownership. "Oh, boy! Ain't that some class! 'Be prepared,' hey," and he went to hand it to his father for his inspection.

There was a crash. The head of the squat Billiken flew off, dropped down on the desk, rolled, and dropped to the floor, and the Judge, who had felt the leaden Death sweep by his cheek, coughed as the whitish smoke sailed up.

Then he caught his little Jack, as the boy, weak with fright, toppled and sobbed on his shoulder.

"Oh! My Daddy! My Daddy!"

"There. There, sonny, I know! It didn't happen, so not a word now! But let that be an indelible lesson for Jack." He disengaged the automatic from the hot little fist and slipped it into a drawer, as the startled head clerk and the open-mouthed office boy flung open the 'Private' door.

"Nothing, Russell; nothing serious. Jack has just had a fainting spell that I think he'll remember for at least a month."

“Two years, Daddy,” wailed a woe-begone voice close to the Judge’s ear.

“You might open that window, Russell and—” to the other, “Carroll, if you’ll close that door and your lips firmly, I’ll see that Mr. Russell gives you a circus ticket for this evening’s show. Understand?”

The door closed firmly and swiftly.

“Russell,” Judge Foole searched his unanswered mail till he found the desired envelope, “see that Carroll, if he shows, e-er,” he was searching for a word, “discretion, gets this before he goes home this night.”

“Yes, Judge,” said Mr. Russell.

“Now, my son, the incident is closed. Not a word to frighten Mother or Gladie. But be more careful, and don’t subject your old daddy to the pleasures of the trenches another time.

“Yes; I’ll commandeer the automatic till you start for the Maryland camp, Jack.”

The Judge looked kindly at the sorrowful figure. “Tell you what you do, son.” He drew out his watch. “There’s plenty of time. Go to Devine’s and have a good swim. I’d love to go along myself, but I have a luncheon date in twenty minutes with an old chum.”

Then half maliciously. “I think, Jack, I’ll try and persuade Father Davis to come along as chaplain this afternoon, in case of another attempted assassination. So meet us in front of the Lawyers’ Club—Connor will have the machine there at one—and we’ll pick up Gladie and see ‘The Greatest Show on Earth.’ Now, good-bye.”

Jack proved that he was bankrupt.

"Here's enough for the swim and a respectable lunch." The Judge cut off thanks and further protestations. "There! There! I know it was an accident. Take one deep dive for Daddy," and a very subdued Jack, still trembling at what might have been, left the office.

"If I was superstitious, I'd say I'd had two warnings this morning. Poor kid! Jack was scared blue. That won't hurt him." And Judge Foole threw the headless Billiken into the waste basket.

As the Judge entered the club, a tall priest with curly black hair, who had been reading his Breviary by a window overlooking the street, closed the book and rose.

"Father Jimmie! This is a pleasure, and it's all mine."

"No; fifty-fifty," laughed Father Davis, returning the vigorous handshake; "I got here only a few minutes ahead of you. Glad I wasn't late."

They passed by the fairly silent reading room, the Judge nodding to several; the smoke-laden billiard room, noisy with chaffing and the constant click, click of ivory striking ivory. At the door of the dining room an obsequious head waiter, hot-looking in his evening clothes, cried: "This way, Judge," and in a little eddy of an alcove switched on the fan and took their Panamas.

They talked, as they lunched, of the old Georgetown days, and the fifteen years since their last meeting. Finally the Judge, as he held a match for the priest's cigar, said:

"So 'Peanut' Collins and his bride went with the 'Lusitania!' Poor old 'Peanut!' 'Member

how he used to boast that a shrimp like himself would bury Gibraltar, Father Jimmie?"

"Ah! Jakko," the Judge blushed at the resurrection of the almost forgotten nickname. "Gibraltar will see us all low; even your granite self."

"Indeed, Father Jim, twice I came near gladdening an undertaker's heart this very morning," and Judge Foole told the attentive face across the table of the jitney and the automatic.

"Ah! Judge, those things do make us think. That's a good workable motto for all of us, those Boy Scouts have. That, and the one you read at the country railway crossing."

Judge Foole pulled on his cigar in silence; short, thick cloudlets of smoke rolled up and whirled away, as the fan's air current caught them. The Judge was following the thoughts the turn in the conversation had cast up.

Father Davis did not interrupt. The absent years had brought him sad rumors of Judge Foole's rise to money and power and of that all too common trailer of success, neglect of the one thing really necessary; and his priestly experience told him that his friend, the harum-scarum "Jakko" of the old decades, had come across one of those precious moments, rifts in the clouds.

"Jakko," said Father Davis, with the bluntness of an old intimate, "how many years is it since you went to Confession?"

The Judge started, and unthinkingly answered: "At least ten, Father."

"Then with all your prosperity you must be miserable. Poor Jakko! Here you've been telling me of your highly uncertain heart, and your

California trip, and your new Chelsea home, and your political ambitions, and what not pleasure plans for the future; and where would they have been, if that jitney had been your car, or that bullet had swerved a wee inch? Judge, you're dabbling in futures. Is it worth it?"

There was a silence, broken only by the whir of the nearby fan, as it swayed from side to side. Father Davis saw his opportunity and grasped it.

"Jakko," he spoke affectionately, "Jakko, old fellow, have you forgotten the parable of your namesake? He was a careless fool, and he planned a barn and a home and, God knows what else for the far-stretching future, and Our Lord said: 'This night,' and——"

Judge Foole held up his hand. "Put down the gun, Father Jimmie. I know all you say is true, gospel true, and some day I'll 'hit the trail' to that 'refugium peccatorum,' Old St. Joseph's and get whitewashed, but not now."

The priest saw another grace was being repulsed.

"You have to-day," he said quietly. "Tomorrow," Father Davis shrugged his shoulders, "nay, this night you haven't. What about 'Safety First,' Judge?"

"Jim, Your Reverence, logically you can't be answered; 'it can't be did,' as my Jack persists in saying. Some day I'll do it. I know I'll sleep easier that night than I have in ten years, and," the Judge pushed back his chair and initialed the slip the waiter had left by his side, "then I'll write you all about it. You always were too serious, Father Jimmie. 'Member the time old 'Tri-

angle Tim' thought he caught you dead to rights smoking in the Physics Room and 'jugged' you for a week? And I was the culprit."

Both laughed, but the Judge's laugh was the heartier.

Jack, with a well-fed look and wet, slicked-down hair, met the two as they emerged from the Lawyers' Club.

"So this is the next generation?" said Father Davis, taking the boy's hand as they settled back in the big enclosed car. "Jack, did any one ever tell you, you look the dead spit of a carefree boy who lived in Conshohocken, twenty-five, no, thirty years ago?"

"No, Father; but that's where Daddy lived when he was a boy."

"Can you guess who the boy was, then?"

"Daddy?" As a light broke, "Why, sure, it was Daddy."

"Right, and I could many a tale unfold of that long-ago lad."

Now Judge Foole thought it wise to point out the proposed beauties of the new boulevard, as yet the dusty, wind-swept possession of contractors' wagons and shoveling Italians.

They picked up and introduced a wildly excited Gladys, and then speeded up Broad to the circus grounds.

Here the fascination of the never old, always young circus world rolled up and enfolded them. The Judge, with Gladys's hand 'checked' in his, and Father Davis doing a like service for Jack's, ran the gauntlet of the ball games, the cane racks, the noisy, smoky shooting galleries; passed the

throne of the hoarse-voiced, convict-looking 'Wienie' king, where Jack paid tribute of a nickel and came into possession of an atrocious 'hot dog' sandwich. Having their tickets, they did not join the pushing swarm that stormed the White Wagon or the Red, but they did tarry slightly before the Side Show, listening to the rude eloquence of the flashily-dressed spielers, and viewing the line of impossible banners, whereon were painted, in rainbow hues, great snakes of prehistoric days, twined generously around jeweled snake charmers; and uncomfortably stout ladies, who, despite their surplus of pounds, persisted in smiling stonily down.

Twice, pushing and being pushed, they made the circuit of the menagerie, stopping till curiosity was killed, before each gaudy animal wagon; and Gladys, after the fourth bag of peanuts had been offered and accepted, had to be forcibly withdrawn from the upturned trunk of her favorite elephant.

"Oh, Daddy, isn't he perfectly dear! An' look, he's hungry; he wants more peanuts."

But Daddy was heartless, and hurried his party into the "Big Top" to the choice center seats under "F." And none too soon, for the Grand Entrance—white horses and fair spangled ladies; enormous, wabby elephants, hidden under brilliant blankets; and Eastern attendants with unmistakably Irish faces, mounted and walking, line after line—swept in and around the saw-dust, to the incessant clang of brass and iron.

The show was on, and an hour later Father Davis looked at the two small, thoroughly happy figures that twitched with delight between himself

and their father. He caught Judge Foole's eyes glistening with huge enjoyment, and laughed.

"Same old show, Judge," and boyishly, "I'm glad I accepted and came."

"Yes; and same old thrills as when—" he nodded to the children.

"Daddy," Jack shook his father's knee, "will you look at that crazy, fool clown! They're going to pull him up in that fake airship. There he goes now! Look! Look! Oh, look, Daddy!"

The Judge turned away from a pole-balancing act in the furthest ring and saw the basket-aeroplane with its white painted "aeronaut" sway and rise toward the center pole, as a straining gang of khaki-clad "roughnecks" pulled on the rope.

Thirty feet the clown rose, smirking and making believe to steer his machine high over the troupe of Japanese tumblers on the platform. Then, as the thousands laughed, drowning the shrill strains of the band, something gave way and the property aeroplane, like unto some of its real brothers, shot to earth, a splintered wreck.

The white clown-suited figure lay as it struck, and Judge Foole, with the tail of his eye, saw Father Davis' hand rise and cross and fall.

Clowns and "roughnecks" quickly carried the limp bundle across the center ring and through the show entrance, while the kaleidoscope performance in ring and track and air went serenely on.

But in a few minutes a burly usher stopped in front of section "F" and scanned the massed rows. Finding the Roman collar he sought, he climbed the aisle and whispered to Father Davis.

"Certainly," said the priest, and telling the

Judge and the curious children to wait, followed the circus man.

When the chariot races were over and the plum-coated ticket sellers were urging the crowd that choked the exits to stop and see the Wild West performance, the Judge and the children made out Father Davis, looking grave, shouldering his way to them.

“Poor fellow! He called for a priest and that usher accidentally remembered seating me in ‘F.’ But he was gone when they brought me into the dressing tent.

“That girl with the Posing Ponies—not the thin one with the picture hat, but the young one in gold and white—is his widow.”

They merged into the out-pouring crowd, and very quietly—even Jack and Gladys sat talkless—the machine carried all to the North Philadelphia Station.

Father Davis was whispering some secret to Jack and the boy nodded gladly. “Good-bye, now.” He continued aloud, “I may see you at the camp. And, Jack, don’t forget. Tell Gladys what I said.”

Leaving the children in the limousine, studying the “Bulletin” and “Ledger,” the Judge and priest walked the platform.

“Poor foolish clown! I didn’t tell you in front of your kids, Judge, all they told me while I stood by his body.” The New York Express rumbled in the distance. “It must have come as the thief in the night to that careless chap. ‘Be Prepared’ is the only safe and sane motto.

“Ah! Jakko,” a great wave of pity for this

neglectful chum swept the priest's breast, "my Mass in the morning is going to be for you, that you may read the handwriting. It's been written large on the wall for you this day. I'll tell you the weak link in your case. With all your well-known careful judicial temperament, there's just one, big, shining thing you overlook. You, like the fool of old, are banking on a distant return; priest at your bedside, Last Sacraments, and that." Father Davis spoke slowly and earnestly, "But suppose you die suddenly, where go your calculations?"

"Ah! Jakko, don't promise yourself days. You're not certain even of this night."

The roar of the cars drowned further words, and Father Davis was aboard.

"Daddy, the 'Phillies' won, and the 'A's' had a two-run lead in the seventh." Jack was jubilant.

"An', Daddy, it's got all about that jitney accident this morning, and it says the chauffeur is going to be held for, for—" Gladys sought the account for the big word, "manslaughter. See it, Daddy?"

They glided out of the station driveway, and passing their home on Broad Street, the Judge called:

"Hello, what's Connor up to?"

"Oh, Daddy, we're going to Confession. Father Davis wanted Gladie and me to receive to-morrow for a very special, important intention of his. And we want to remember that poor clown man too. We told Connor."

"Who owns this car, anyway?" said the Judge,

good-humoredly, and a few minutes later they were bumping along Stiles Street, honking to heedless children, and drew up before the immense red and white Gesù, that towered, a giant, above the neighborhood.

"Won't hurt you to go too, Daddy." Gladys gasped at the unmeditated words and covered her mouth.

"Do, Daddy," added Jack, "an' we'll all receive for Father Davis' intention. He said it's something for you, Daddy."

The Judge half rose from his seat, then settled back.

"Not to-night, my dears. Some other time. Run along now and don't keep me too long from my supper."

The children were gone.

Gladie's "Won't hurt you to go too, Daddy" echoed in the Judge's ear, and he threw down the paper. Why not go now? Chance—or was it chance?—had warned him thrice this day, and now it had directed him to the very doors of the church.

The Judge sat back with half-closed lids. So that shirtwaisted girl had been killed.—Jack's joyous "Be Prepared, hey" and the thin smoke curling up from the automatic.—Father Jimmie's earnest gesture as he said: "You're not certain even of this night."—The careless smile on the white-painted face the second before the rope parted.—And again Gladie's blurted words.

"Mere coincidences. Some day," said the Judge, and his gaze dropped to the timepiece, set

in the partition. "Good Heavens! What's keeping those children?"

He snatched his Panama and stepped into the vast dimness of the Gesù. He walked up the side aisle, by the few penitents kneeling, awaiting their turn at the confessionals. At a side chapel, half way up, he hesitated, peering around for the two familiar little figures, and as he did, a white-haired priest, erect and handsome, stepped out of a nearby confessional. Mistaking the Judge for a last penitent, the father stopped and made as though he would go back, but Judge Foole, seeing the priest's mistake, shook his head and walked rapidly toward the altar. He had recognized his two, kneeling at the railing.

"Come," he said, and touched them. They passed out into the evening.

"I feel so bathed and clean, Daddy. But hungry! Hot Doggie! Won't I kill supper!" Jack patted his stomach.

They swung out of Broad Street into their private driveway, and the car stopped under the stone archway. Jack and Gladie dashed out and raced up the great gray steps to Mother, who, gowned for dinner, appeared smiling in the doorway.

Breathless they told her of the circus and the clown; each tugging at her, claiming her undivided attention.

"Oh, Mama, he dropped and he was dead 'fore Father Davis could——"

"Kiddies, why doesn't father come?" Mrs. Foole saw her husband still sitting in the ma-

chine, and then she noticed Connor, who had turned, was leaping out of the front of the car.

Instinctively she felt something was wrong and gathering her flimsy skirts in one hand, she parted the children and ran down the steps.

He sat deep in the cushions, his face working horribly and one hand trying vainly to clutch his heart. As she reached him, Judge Foole pitched forward to his Judgment.

AS THE CLOCK STRIKES

O STREET crosses 36th just before it buries itself, like a river into the ocean, in the wide grounds that surround the gray-towered buildings of Georgetown University. This intersection is a quiet corner. There is something of eternity's peace in its very atmosphere. Its untroubled existence is broken only at the hours when sturdy legs and dainty feet hurry to and from the white-faced schools that flank old Trinity Church. Then, save for an occasional trolley and rare traffic, a sauntering group of Georgetown boys, and the evening play of children, it remains the quiet corner, becoming to the neighborhood of an ancient seat of learning.

Yet over its academic calm, with grim unrelenting determination, the great clock in the tallest tower of Georgetown University forever proclaims the passing of the hours. Day and night, month and year, from the high gray tower, each quarter of the hour is broadcasted over the collegiate vicinity. Summer and winter, the unalterable record of Time's relentless march toward eternity is sounded on unheeding ears.

It is a raw morning in the white months of the year now. Christmas and its Crib have gone:

snow is falling. Blue and pearly clouds, heralding yet more snow, ride low over the frozen Potomac and white Georgetown Heights. Ice like steel coats the car tracks on 36th Street. Few are abroad. The majority of the muffled-up school children have disappeared within the welcome doors—for the air is biting and the classrooms cozy. Laggards quicken their steps. Shortly, the clock in the gray tower of Georgetown will strike nine o'clock and lateness means extra school work. There will be good skating at The Playgrounds this afternoon.

A lad, apple-cheeked, slim, and booted, his tolerated schoolbooks under one arm, appears at the quiet corner. He looks like a clear morning in Spring.

Down the air comes the first of the strokes that announce the beginning of a new hour: another school day.

The lad hears a "Georgetown" car swing around the corner of P Street, by the snow-topped wall of the Visitation Convent, and, approvingly, he halts at the quiet corner to watch the sparks of Roman candles radiate from her trucks.

Unheeded, from the gray tower comes the second stroke.

The lad looks along O Street and he recognizes his mother, her familiar green coat tightly wrapped about her, coming toward him.

Another stroke records the hour and, unconsciously, the lad slips another caramel into his mouth and resumes his progress toward the Boys' School, half a square away.

His quick eyes see the old priest, whose Mass he had served two hours before, stand framed on the porch of Trinity Church. The priest prepares to descend the slippery steps and the lad notes the extreme care Age takes lest it fall.

For the fourth time, the invisible clock strikes and its sound awakens a troubling thought in the lad's mind. He quickens his pace, running on the far side of the street. In front of Trinity he starts to cut diagonally across the car tracks. His hand instinctively goes to his cap in reverence to The Master within His Home.

The lad hears, alarmingly close, a clanging in his ears. And he slips.

Again, a stroke of the clock is proclaiming over Georgetown that a new hour has come.

For the lad, the gray day, the fresh smell of new falling snow, the taste of caramel, the white fires of sudden agony, and the grinding of hasty brakes, all cease.

The five gates through which the lad sensed Georgetown and the familiar things of his world swing closed swiftly—shriekingly—forever.

Forever is the soul of the lad looking on light, brighter than the light of many noonday suns. He has come out of the narrow River of Life and he lives in a ocean of light, warm loving light. And One is there, the Center from which this light radiates infinitely. This One, the soul of the lad instinctively adores. For he recognizes the Countenance of God, his Judge. And as he falls forward there arises before him, babyhood, with its pleasant dreams and the constantly hovering face of his mother: the toddling days, when

chairs and table tops seemed lofty: all the forgotten years when he was a youngster; every game in the street, every lesson in the Grades, the coming of a chance heard word and his innocent repetition of it. There arises again the happy peace of the First Confession afternoon and the gladness of that morrow, when this One, now judging, came in all His Hidden Loveliness to the small welcoming heart. The incomplete boyhood and its venial mishaps pass like an inexorable parade. Inexorably, each omission, each hasty commission, each repentance, each whispered prayer of hope and faith, of sorrow and of love, come and are gone. The Communion of the morning Mass that was Viaticum is seen again and this time with the veil of bread withdrawn. Swiftly unrolls Time's record of this young completed life; its few budding years and their cleanliness.

Then the soul of the lad hears for the first time the Wondrous Voice and Its words are welcome and praise. "Come, you who have kept your heart sweet. Come, dearest." And a Scarred Hand enfolds on a Sacred Breast a new child of the Church Triumphant.

The Judgment is over forever. Few the years of trial, few the sorrows, few the joys, yet this lad has won into the white company that followeth the Lamb whithersoever He goeth: into the white choir that sing their unique song.

The lad is before the Lady All Fair, whose robes are blue and star-scattered: whose countenance is calm as Her Son's: whose radiance lights all Heaven: and, yet, whose welcome is the tender

welcome of a Mother, whose little son has been away in places dangerous and is now at length come safely home.

She says: "See, dearest, many wait to welcome you."

Then the horizon of Heaven broadens before the lad and he sees an ocean of souls attend the Lady All Fair and the lad knows them at once. These children of the Kingdom, who had been men and women, boys and girls, in that distant world of probation. Choirs and hosts and legions and glittering-robed armies, like wheat in a mighty field; seas of angels, winged myriads of Cherubim and Seraphim, a vast Milky Way on a still August night, beyond calculation, innumerable, spreads out and out, ever out, before the enraptured soul of the lad.

Yet he knows them and he knows their intimate stories. Old kings and shepherd boys, who had lingered in Limbo, slaves who once toiled along the Nile, and free men of Greece, prophets of Judea, and children who reddened the sands of the Colosseum; young nuns, whose cloistered days had been holily passed in vaulted monasteries of Gaul, of Merrie England, and of Old Castile. Souls, who had been Christ's valiant Vicars and "the Thieves of Paradise," who flew Home with the Baptismal drops still damp upon their brows. Souls of the lad's own century, who had won to their places among these bright trillions, from Japan and Ireland and Chile, from torrid India, from the islands of the south, from his own broad-bosomed America.

Each the lad knows in that first glad glance and

each of these knows him intimately, joyously, brotherly.

The lad, as the sight becomes almost oppressively happy, turns to the bright spirit who radiates at his side and cries:

"Oh! Guardian, what are the centuries that I have been here?"

"We have no bonds of years, dearest. Time and its decades are for the toiling mortals."

The Guardian suggests: "Behold the centuries of your sojourn, O dearest."

And the soul of the lad is looking again on the white-pillared portico of Trinity Church. A trolley is just stopping under the clamp of emergency brakes. The old priest has halted on the icy steps and his hand is hastily rising to give Absolution.

Beneath the trolley; caught, entangled, cruelly crushed, is a darkening form, warm and very still . . .

At the quiet corner is the green-coated figure of a woman about to cross the tracks, all unconscious of the halted trolley half a square away and the sorrow so soon to rush upon her.

Over the roofs of the red-faced homes across from old Trinity comes the sound of the clock in the gray tower of Georgetown University, still striking the morning hour.

"Why, why it's only nine o'clock!" exclaims the lad unbelievably.

"And it always will be, dearest," promises the Guardian.

THE SIN OF SIMON GOLD

THERE are some men who die hardened, and the effects of their sin are buried with them, and there are others whom His mercy finally softens. These come, leaving behind the circle of their sin to widen and widen, till it washes on the shores of Eternity. I, Simon Gold, am one of these others.

Back in the forgotten 'thirties I was called, and with the very summons ringing in my ears, there came up before me the picture of a boy in old France, a fresh-faced boy, attractive in all the grace of a First Communion Day, who was kneeling by the bed of his mother, and she was saying so anxiously:

“Simon, my wilful one, when I am gone I fear you will stray far, but remember, come back to Him.”

And now I lay, a withered, little old man, on the point of embarking. “Come back to Him” like a voice across an abyss called, and I was sorry with a great sorrow. And viewing with sudden light what I had done, I gasped:

“My will! I don’t mean it. I change——”

But they that stood by my high-posted bed murmured:

“He wanders.”

Then my eyes were touched, and I stood blinking before Him, and my eighty and more years, each day and each deed, were passing in judgment.

I lived before my eyes, seeing again the boy in the blue blouse and the blue-heavened years, when God was near; then the coming of deliberate sin, repeated till I sickened at the sight, when I, a merchant, sought profits as pleasure, when my ships, that sailed the known seas, were my soul, and monies poured into my countinghouse from the far quarters of the earth and my fellow-citizens quoted as a proverb the luck of Simon Gold.

Then, like the spreading of a cancer, the ambition of my last years to perpetuate my name and my indifference to God in a great college, where orphans would be reared, knowing Him not; the many plans I evolved, and the malicious drawing up of my steel-ribbed will.

All these deeds of the years, like stones in an evil structure, piled their hideousness before me and I saw them, for the first time, as they stood awful in their true light; failures of days that men called successful.

Then I heard my sentence:

“Simon, your punishment shall be to tarry beyond My Presence and see your will accomplished. Go, Simon!”

Quickly I became one of that forgotten army, whom few think to pray for. Time crept by on broken limbs, minutes as centuries. I had always before me the memory of my forgiven sin and

there was the longing in every fibre of my being to be readmitted to His Presence. That I craved as the parched crave water. And yet I knew I could not satisfy my thirst till I had seen, as He had decreed, the accomplishment of my evil will.

Forgotten, remorseful, patient, loving, I waited my day, and when I had been here eighty-one years, the span of my wasted days, I was directed to return and see some of the ruin I had wrought.

It was the twentieth of May, the day I used to call my birthday, that I was sent back to my city and the sight of my sin.

There before me, circling the many-acred grounds, was the brown stone wall that stood sullen and solid, warning God away from Gold College.

Unnoticed, save by the pitying Angels, I passed the lodge and received my first view of the sad work of my wealth. Beyond the well-kept lawn and its bed of swaying flowers was a magnificent pile of white marble. It smiled in the morning light. Broad steps led up to and supported the Corinthian columns of what was a fitting emblem of my sin—a pagan temple.

In this godless house, the main building of Simon Gold College, were the ashes of my body. I glanced at my stately tomb, and then turned to view the group of substantial marble buildings, that, buried in trees, flanked this pagan temple. Beautiful to the sight were these homes of my wards, as the sun streamed on their vine-green sides.

But they were merely the handsome shells of my sin. I was soon to sound its depth. I left the

pagan temple behind, passing a bronze Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, and wandered down the shaded avenue to the dawn-gray buildings. Each I entered in turn, and I saw my wards at their lessons. Through classroom after classroom full of silently busy boys I went, looking in vain for the crucifix that had hung before my schoolboy eyes. But I remembered my hand had banished this inspiration. And I, a Catholic, was the Founder of this! Ah! I had only seen a corner of my sin.

By the far-stretching playgrounds I wandered. It was recess time now and little figures in khaki and white screamed and raced in every direction, and the faces of those that rushed near I scanned, but on the countenances of nearly all was written the ignorance of God. Then my heart flamed against those who, dazzled by the glitter of a material education, had signed away their boys. But shame quickly cooled my indignation, shame backed by the remembrance of my bequeathed millions.

I turned away from the playgrounds of the Gold boys and entered the Mechanical School. Here again, busy sections eagerly worked by shaving-heaped carpenter bench or glowing forge. Again I searched the faces about me, and again I saw they belonged to those who were learning but the knowledge of the passing world.

I left the shops and skirted the playgrounds, noticing them not. My thoughts were heavy with the burden of what a splendid ruin I had achieved, and there came before me, like the return of an evil bird, the boast I had often made in

life, "When I am dead my actions must speak for me."

But a sharper edge of my sin was to cut me. To my left rose a pleasant-faced building, and I was drawn to enter.

A boy on a crutch crossed the corridor and hobbled into a sun-swept ward. Here in the twin, white rows of beds I saw the pale, patient, white-clad lads, who lay quiet, or now and then turned big eyes to the group of convalescents, busy with trifles by the warm windows.

Through this ward and yet others I wandered, and everywhere I noted the minute care the body in need received.

Beyond the last ward I came to an open door. A hush hung over the room. A keen-eyed doctor and an alert nurse were watching the troubled little figure that tossed in the bed. I saw the doctor turn to his fellow-watcher and shrug his shoulders, as he put his hand flat on the hot forehead.

The troubled figure moved and opened his eyes in expectation.

"Father!" he said, and he spoke with such evident relief, "oh, I'm so glad you came!"

Then, seeing to whom he was talking, a trapped look came into the face and he explained disappointedly:

"Please, sir, I thought you were the priest. Ain't he ever going to come, Doctor, ain't he?" and the boy's hand glued the strong fingers of the man.

"There, there, Pat! Don't be foolish! You

know priests are forbidden Gold College. Sleep now."

The doctor worked to release his hand and was gone.

The trapped look deepened and then gave way to a more horrible one.

"I want to see a priest, a priest!" The cry arose and would not down. "A priest! I must tell him."

The nurse closed the door hastily.

"Ah! Let him come just once, will you?"

Again and again that vain appeal seared me, and riveted to the scene, I watched the last sands of this young life drain violently out. At length, with a cry that I'll hear while God is God, he was silent.

Not till then could I leave that awfully still room, and as I passed out into the checkered shade of the beautiful avenue, flanked with its massive gray buildings, I saw many people had assembled within the college grounds.

A Gothic chapel, a mockery at my college, stood across the drive, and once more my punishment made me enter and hear.

There before me in endless half circles was an audience, and they listened approvingly while on the platform a fluent speaker, himself an old Gold boy, was eulogizing the Founder.

He was saying how on this Founder's Day, they were assembled to applaud the splendid work Gold College was doing—I thought of the troubled figure—and he told, as something gratulatory, how every bequested dollar had multiplied itself by five, till now my few millions had become

many and the work of Simon Gold would spread with the coming years.

Ah, the pain of that moment in which was borne to me the full realization that what he said was true, and I was helpless to thwart it! I, who had ceased to be the master of my actions! For in the days of my deliberate choosing I had cast the stone, and the ripples of my causing, ever widening, would roll out and out.

My vision was filled with the troubled figures—He, who is Knowledge, alone knows how many!—that I had robbed, and would rob, of their heritage.

I fled the chapel and the cruel words of praise and honor that stung me like avenging rods. I had seen my cancer of a college, my sin in all its fair rankness, and I cried out in my agony:

“God! My offended God! Send me back and plunge me into the keenest flame, there to stay till You come again, but don’t, don’t let this, my evil doing, go on!”

DISTINGUISHED ANCESTRY

THE Brooklyn home of the Morgans—Admiral Manly K. Morgan, U. S. N. (retired), and his family—faced Prospect Park Plaza. From the dining-room windows the snow-burdened trees, the icy shrubs and the white driveway, on which sped a smart, jingling sleigh, formed a winter background to the marble Soldiers' and Sailors' Arch that stood out in the cold January sun.

Mrs. Morgan looked up from her grape fruit and caught her guest, Mrs. Kramer, admiring the view.

"Does that sight please your Chicago eyes, Julie?" she questioned, glancing with a smile at her convent-day friend. "I never tire of watching the park entrance."

"Oh, 'my Chicago eyes,' May, have beheld similar scenes, and yours did, too," added that lady with Middle Western pride, "before the Admiral brought you East. By the way, May, you should hear from him soon, shouldn't you? He has had time to write from Jamaica," and Mrs. Juliette Kramer raised her brown eyes in familiar inquiry.

"I'm expecting a letter in this morning's mail.

Except for the wireless Christmas greetings, when the 'Penn State' was off Hatteras, the Admiral has not sent a line. But that's his way when he goes South to escape the winter's rigor. He gets below Cuba before the letters come, and they usually begin and end with a plea for me to change my mind, take the next steamer, and help him admire tropical scenery.

"I might, but I don't fancy the prospect of leaving Van Rensselaer in charge of the house during our absence. I did that two winters ago, Jule, but as Van Rensselaer says, 'Believe me, never again.' "

Mrs. Morgan's slim right hand went up in solemn protestation, an unconscious imitation of the gesture her youngest linked with his favorite expression. She let her arm drop as the maid entered with the letterman's delivery.

"Oh, Celeste, what have you there? One from the Admiral?"

"I don't know, madame, but there are several for you and for Mrs. Kramer."

Both ladies tore open their envelopes. Breakfast cooled and the cosy room was silent, but for the shrill piping of the canaries and the twitter of the other saucy birds that hung in the sunshiny bay window.

"Jule, listen this instant," cried Mrs. Morgan, waving the written sheets that betrayed the Admiral's pen. "Manly has met a relative, and such a relative! But wait. I'll read it," her glance ran rapidly over the pages. "It's from the Queen's Hotel, Kingston. He feels much improved in health. Jamaica hasn't changed.

Couldn't I meet him at Panama—What did I tell you, Jule? —Oh, here's the place. Just listen:

“ ‘Last evening I made a curious discovery—go from home to learn the news, and all that stuff. In the hotel lobby I met a Welshman, Sir James Morgan. His “bug” is genealogy, so I soon found myself on the stand. (Wished I had your bump of memory, May, for I'd have made a better witness)’ ”—Mrs. Morgan's nose took a sudden tilt skyward. “ ‘But when I mentioned grandfather hailed from Aberystwyth, my loquacious Welshman went into action at once. He started to rapid fire questions and I soon learned we were distant cousins. Then he tacked and told from whom we were descended. No less important a personage than the gallant Sir Henry Morgan, who was deputy-governor of this “yer” Jamaica back in the 1680's, and was knighted by Charles II for his executive abilities and—er—r—other charming traits.’ ”

She looked up.

“ ‘I wonder why Manly wrote that ‘other charming traits,’ Jule? Sir Henry Morgan, no doubt, rendered signal services to the Crown to be raised by his sovereign to knighthood.’ ”

Mrs. Morgan put down the letter and laughed to her friend.

“ ‘Now isn't that glorious news, Jule? Sir Henry must have been one of those delightful colonial governors, sent out from England before the Revolution. I knew there was something romantic about Manly, that he sprung from a noble line, and I always wanted him to trace back his ancestors, but he never would.

“Van Rensselaer, however, has family pride. Only last week he came to me, inquiring if we were descended from any famous people, and it’s a coincidence, but he particularly asked about a Sir Henry Morgan who lived in Jamaica. Oh, I’m sure he’ll feel elated to learn of his father’s fortunate meeting!”

“I didn’t know ‘Buck’ was interested in genealogy, too,” said Mrs. Kramer.

“Please, Jule,” begged Mrs. Morgan earnestly, “don’t call Van Rensselaer ‘Buck.’ He’s a sensitive child and I think he feels any pointed allusion to his prominent teeth.”

“All right, then, ‘Van Rensselaer’ it shall be. But I thought, May, most of his spare time was devoted to the revival of piracy.”

Mrs. Morgan shook her head sadly.

“Indeed, I can’t account for this strange attraction he feels for those sea robbers.” Then, decidedly, “He doesn’t get it from me, and I trust his awakening interest in the family tree will take his mind off this pirate nonsense.

“But, ‘the gallant Sir Henry Morgan,’ ” she went on gayly. “Why, even the name sounds romantic and colonial! I must get his picture for the drawing-room,” and she mused on while Mrs. Kramer resumed her mail.

Suddenly recalling her duties as hostess, she exclaimed:

“Jule, you poor starved dear, your breakfast is ruined, while I’ve been ‘two points off my course,’ to employ the Admiral’s phrase. Let me ring for Celeste and get you hot coffee.”

The ladies chattered away; then went shopping

and motored to Brooklyn Prep to pick up Van Rensselaer after class.

But that young Jesuit pupil was not there. Unaware of the coming of his mother's car, he had gone off with Tommie Hamilton.

The twain were in First Year High and were riveted chums through a mutual affection for corsairs. During the past three years they had talked pirates in the winter free time, and had played pirates during the summers on the Morgan houseboat, till now "Buck" Morgan, master of the "Revengeful Revenge" and "Cap'n" Hamilton, imaginary owner of the imaginary pirate ship "Keg of Blood," had acquired a knowledge of the buccaneers of the American coast, their lives and ways and ends, that was worthy of a college degree.

This afternoon "Buck" wanted the aid of Tommie's vivid imagination in composing a "pirate" epistle to his brother Paul, a Junior at Holy Cross, and the two boys were sauntering home to write the account before supper.

Van heard his mother and Mrs. Kramer entertaining callers, and as they crept up the front stairs he caught, "Yes, my husband happened to discover his kinship only recently. It arose from a chance meeting. They are a noble Welsh family, and had a colonial governor—" but the two went up to "Buck's" room.

It was the back wall of this "den" that would attract, yet repel, the nervous observer. A large skull and crossbones pennant, that showed frayed edges from many a summer's breeze and adventure on Gravesend Bay, graced the gilt frames

of three pictures whose titles—"No Quarter," "A Shadow From the Yard-arm," and "Capt. Kidd's Last Prize"—at least suggested their subject-matter.

Hamilton, after refreshing his memory with a long look at the red deck of the first picture, flung his school-books upon the bed and dragged a chair across to "Buck's" desk.

Then the "pirate" skipper composed, for the benefit of the Holy Cross Junior, a description of the last make-believe adventure of the Morgan corsair and her consort, the Hamilton "Keg of Blood." After which ruddy exercise the two captains parted, "Cap'n" Tommie promising to drop the gory epistle into the mail-box on his way home.

Van Rensselaer Morgan appeared unusually subdued at the family table. Neither his mother nor Aunt Jule could notice that they were dining with the feared master of the "Revengeful Revenge," whose afternoon exploit was the capture and scuttling of the giant "Leviathan." "Buck's" head was swimming with visions of the late "deed," and his share in the table talk was purely negative.

"What is the matter, Van Rensselaer?" asked his parent, noticing the unusual silence of her thirteen-year-old. "You seem very preoccupied this evening."

"Perhaps Van is studying too hard," suggested Mrs. Kramer.

"No, Aunt Jule. I was just thinking. But not about studies," he truthfully volunteered.

"Mother," he added a moment later, "did you hear from pa yet?"

"Oh, Van Rensselaer, I'm glad you spoke. Your father sent a long letter to-day. It's in my boudoir. And I have good news for you. Do you remember last week speaking of our family tree, and asking particularly if we were descendants of a Sir Henry Morgan?"

"Yes, mother. Am I?" Van Rensselaer had suddenly come to life in a manner that shook the dinner dishes. "Oh, please say 'yes'!"

"Well, it seems we are," continued Mrs. Morgan, delighted at her son's interest in ancestral Morgans. "The Admiral met a relative at Kingston, and this Sir James Morgan is a direct descendant of the gallant Sir Henry Morgan who was deputy governor of Jamaica back in the seventeenth century and was knighted for his services by King Charles II."

A grin of pure delight had been slowly spreading over the descendant's features, till its further progress threatened to engulf nose and ears. Van Rensselaer stopped breathing, sat erect, then sprang from his chair and began a wild dance around the dining-table.

"Van Rensselaer! Van Rensselaer, my child! stop this at once. Immediately," cried his mother. "Don't be so demonstrative. It is not polite."

"Oh, believe me, mother!" exclaimed the joyous "Buck," hugging and disarranging her evening toilette. "It's true then! It's all true! 'Sir Henry Morgan,' pa wrote? The gallant Morgan himself? What, am I a cousin?"

"Buck" waltzed over to Aunt Jule and, foregoing manly conventionalities in the shock of his father's news, embraced that lady.

Mrs. Morgan was perplexed. Aware of her son's new interest in the family genealogy, she did not understand why this particular Sir Morgan should throw her youngest offspring into such paroxysms of joy.

"But, Van Rensselaer, do you know the career of this distinguished Sir Henry?"

"Do I know the career of Henry Morgan!" flung back "Buck," forgetful of maternal respect. "Say, believe me, I'd rather be a direct descendant of him than the only son of the President. Oh, wait till I call up Tommie Hamilton! Excuse me, everybody, please," and Van dashed his napkin upon the table and darted in the direction of the phone.

Mrs. Morgan sat gazing after him, positively worried.

"Don't let 'Buck's' capers disturb you, May," said practical Mrs. Kramer, whose knowledge of boys and boys' ways was vast. "Perhaps Van knows more interesting details of 'our new ancestor' than you imagine. They will come out soon."

The dining-room door had been left open by the excited Van Rensselaer in his flight, and the two ladies heard the phone bell whir, then "Buck's" shrill voice, higher than usual:

"Yes, Mrs. Hamilton. May I speak with Tommie, please?"

There was a pause.

“Hello, hello! Hey, that you, Cap’n? It’s me, ‘Buck’.”

Mrs. Morgan straightened at her hopeful’s English.

“Congratulate me—What! No, it’s not my birthday. I’m not ‘Buck,’ I’m ‘Buccaneer’ Morgan now—Because there’s real pirate blood in me!—No, honest. Who do you think is my ancestor?—Guess again—Naw; not that fellow!—No; he was hung—Nope—Not Kidd. Better yet—*Sir Henry Morgan!*—Honest, Tommie, it’s true—Direct descendant, yep. I must be a cousin at least—How? Oh, pa met a nephew or something in Jamaica, and he found out he’s a descendant of the buccaneer, so that makes me one, too—What? I don’t know about ma. She only married into the family. Maybe she’s one by marriage though—But, Tommie, ’member when he sacked Panama he killed with his own hand—What?—You just bet. Wait till I tell the bunch at The Prep. Wait till I telegraph Paul. Hoia, hoia, chu-chu, rah-rah. *Morgan. Me!*”

The listeners heard a chuckle.

“Too bad, poor Tommie Hamilton, you have only ordinary blood in you—Hey? Sure, at the corner of Eighth Street, right away. So long, Cap’n.”

It was crystal clear what had caused Van Rensselaer’s delight. But Mrs. Kramer did not know how Mrs. Morgan would take her son’s ambition to waken the neighborhood with the startling news till the descendant of the gallant Sir Henry “by marriage” called out coldly:

“Van Rensselaer. Van Rensselaer Morgan.”

“Yes, mother.”

“Come here this instant.”

“Buck,” cap and overcoat in hand, entered the room. His eyes were shining with pleasurable excitement and he little suspected lurking danger.

“Sit down and finish your dessert.”

“But I’m not hungry, mother. I got a ‘date’ with Tommie at——”

“Son!”

The magic of that single word bewitched the cap and coat from Van’s hand and he resumed his place.

“Aunt Jule and I overheard your conversation at the phone. Now, will you please tell me just what you know of this Morgan individual?”

“Sure, ma—I mean, mother. Henry was the son of a Welsh farmer, born about 1637,” rattled off this piratical encyclopedia to the blank amazement of his parent. “There wasn’t much doing around the old farm, so he became a sailor when he was about my age and cruised all over—more than pa, even—till he came to the West Indies. The buccaneers were having a jim-dandy time of it there. A Frenchman was their leader, but for some cause or other he got hung, and Morgan became their captain, and he rose to be the first pirate of his age, or any age!”

“Buck” accompanied this flight with a gesture he had acquired that afternoon in elocution class.

“He took Spanish boats galore, and never a man on ’em lived to tell, and once, with thirty-nine small ships and two thousand men he attacked Panama—that was before they thought of

building a canal there, Aunt Jule—and after only one day's siege, he and his brave buccaneers took the city!”

Van Rensselaer had risen, to command better attention. He continued impressively:

“An’ my ancestor put every man and woman and child, without regard to age, or sex, or—or previous degree of servitude—to the sword! There were two and a half inches of blood, ma——”

“What!” exclaimed his horrified parent.

“—in the main street of Panama that day, and after dark they didn’t have to switch on the electric lights, ’cause every house was in flames. My ancestor done that—Sir Henry Morgan!”

“Buck” Morgan sat down, and Aunt Jule absent-mindedly asked:

“What did your ancestor do then, Van?”

“Oh, after that, he went back to Jamaica, and the English king was so tickled that he made Mr. Morgan a knight and gave him a swell job in Jamaica. I just forget what it was. But he died in 1691—no, 1690—and he was buried with full military honors. Gee! Tommie was jealous when I told him, mother, but wait till I send a telegram to Paul and tell the fellows who we are! Wow!”

Aunt Jule was forming appropriate congratulatory remarks in her mind, when Mrs. Morgan began:

“Van Rensselaer Morgan, you will do nothing of the kind! You will oblige me by never mentioning this person in my presence again. He’s your and your father’s forbear; not mine. By

marriage I contracted no relationship with any swashbuckler Morgan ancestor. Now I understand perfectly, Jule, what the Admiral meant in his letter by 'the other charming traits' of this common cutthroat—this—this low pirate leader.

"But enough! Van Rensselaer, you will not meet Thomas Hamilton this evening to spread the report of this disgraceful connection among your acquaintances. The idea! As for Paul, I shall write your brother myself and break this news to him as gently as possible. You may study your lessons to-night, sir."

Mrs. Morgan rose from the table with the look of one who has seen the family skeleton, and Van Rensselaer, knowing his mother, deemed it the part of discretion to heed scrupulously this latest maternal command.

He climbed to his "stateroom," but study that night was wasted effort for happy "Buck" Morgan, remote descendant of the gallant Sir Henry Morgan, one time buccaneer and, later, deputy governor of His Majesty's colony of Jamaica.

THE LAST PEW

THERE is something kindly about the last pews in the church. The Pharisees of the parish hear the call "Friend, go up higher," and they invariably do. But the Publicans find it more consoling to slip into the last pews and here whisper their "Be merciful to me, a sinner." The "F. F." of the congregation have their names neatly inserted on the front pews. Usually, the pews in the rear are unreserved. The lambs and the prize sheep of the flock are pastured up the aisle. Alas, the more numerous goats herd in the rear. So the varnish sooner wears off the last pews. The wood of their kneeling benches wears smooth and shiny, like an old priest's cassock. And like an old Confessor himself, the last pews become the confidant of those who labor and are burdened.

When joy rides in the heart it is natural to sail up the main aisle and float into the seats nearest the altar rails. Children, especially prim little misses, unconsciously seek the front pews.

When sorrow and misunderstandings weigh down the shoulders, what is more natural than to slink into the wise old last pews and there, with troubled head veiled in hands, pour out the whole story to Him, Who understands so well. Often, the Tabernacle seems nearer to the humble last

pews than to the proud pews ahead, that, somehow, are “not like other pews.”

The curtained Confessionals, where the mercy of God falls on His contrite people, are always close to the last pews.

If the Good Maker had given pews—last pews—the gift of tongues, what tales they would have to tell! They are the nearest inanimate approach to Consolers and Confidants and Father Confessors—those kindly old worn last pews.

They are reminiscent of some of the more human Saints: Francis of Assisi, who loved his “Lady Poverty” and pal-ed around with furry pets; busy St. Anthony, who runs “The Lost and Found Department” for High Heaven; and good St. Joseph, who gets eventually, the “hard luck” stories of all ages and both sexes.

Yet, sometimes, these understanding last pews, like chivalrous Boy Scouts, “Do a Good Turn Daily” themselves.

For instance, that afternoon when Young Doctor Dick dropped into the shadowy church, he had no sooner blessed himself with Holy Water than quite naturally he slipped into the last pew.

Professionally speaking, there was not a cloud on Young Doctor Dick’s horizon. He had taken over Old Doctor Dick’s practice and increased it. But there were, this afternoon, too many wrinkles on his brow to wager the guess that all was well with his world. His goose didn’t honk high. Young Doctor Dick looked as though he believed it was cooked permanently. And the silent last pew, somehow, seemed to understand how matters stood.

Trials look so different from the shelter of the last pew. And Young Doctor Dick no more than knelt up against the smooth back of the pew in front, than two wrinkles in his brow, sort of unfolded their creases, and, like the wicked, ceased from troubling. The last pew was again exerting a grandfatherly influence over Young Doctor Dick.

And why shouldn't it? Hadn't it been the first pew in the church to hold him, when—not so terribly long ago, as decades go—he waited there, a long white-robed and blue-ribboned pagan, sleeping in the arms of his prospective god-mother, while his pastor got salt and oil and water ready at the nearby font. Later, Young Doctor Dick emitted his first healthy Catholic yell from this same old last pew, while his smiling god-mother tied the lacy bonnet around the pink and downy head, still damp with its baptismal drops.

Of course, last pews cannot think, but they have their subtle ways of suggesting thoughts; soothing, strengthening thoughts, to the perplexed minds of their favorites.

So, in some gentle way, Young Doctor Dick found himself recalling the sight of a freckled and red-haired self in a soiled baseball suit, with "St. Aloysius' Tigers" streaming across the shirt, kneeling right here in this very last pew.

A stubby hand that was no friend to soap, clasped a brand new baseball. A husky voice that broke ridiculously at times, was whispering: "Make me pitch 'em good to-day. We got to lick them 'Third Ward Midgets.' That's all there is

to it. 'And if I only don't go up in the air! 'Hail Mary, full of grace——' "

Young Doctor Dick looked down at his immaculate hands, the strong and sensitive hands of a physician, and his eye rested broodingly on the ring finger of the right hand. It twisted—that baseball finger—faintly reminiscent of a bull pup's tail. Yes; that happened in that disastrous game. It hurt too, even after Dolly, rooting loyally on the base-lines, had insisted on turning little mother and bandaging it with the ruins of her best cambric handkerchief. Young Doctor Dick recalled as though he was hearing it again, Dolly's hastily whispered: "Oh! Dickie, go back now and get that horrid Calvin Denziger out. He can't run as good as I can."

Alas! for the volunteered advice! The former star mound-artist of the "St. Aloysius' Tigers" did not desire to remember more of that awful slaughter. But there did swim into his vision another time, an anxious time, when he came often to this last pew and prayed with the fervor of despairing youth. Dolly was very low with diphtheria, and the blinds were drawn in the upper front room of her home across the street. His father crossed that street often those anxious days and nights, and he remained long in that upper front room. There came the evening when Dickie had waylaid his Dad and had heard with whitening face the confession: "I am afraid little Dolly is going Home. The next few hours will tell." The old doctor had suggested: "Better run over to the church and say some prayers.

They will help her, son, more than my best medicines."

But—thank God!—Dolly survived the crisis, and Young Doctor Dick remembered with a sudden leap of heart the Saturday afternoon, a month later, when dropping into this last pew to prepare for Weekly Confession, a wan and thin Dolly had come and knelt demurely beside him. After saying their Penances, they walked slowly home together that happy afternoon; he bashful and she more quiet than usual.

Yes, by George! remembered Young Doctor Dick with unseemly satisfaction, that was the night I chased and blacked Calvin Denziger's eyes—it was none of his business with whom I walked—and I had to go to Confession again before the "8 o'clock" next morning.

Then Mrs. Sheehan had taken her daughter and placed her with "The Madames" in another city and there came up pleasant memories of the Christmas holidays and summer vacations, when a bewitching Dolly returned home, and a young medical student sought her company.

Now the two wrinkles came back to Young Doctor Dick's brow and creased into seven others. And the direct cause of these wrinkles were the memories of the desirable Miss Dolly Sheehan, a debutante now, and these pleasant pictures of memory all led up to and broke off abruptly at the night of that confounded K. of C. Dance at the Parish Hall.

At least you'd think "The Madames" might have taught that girl a sense of elementary justice! Why wouldn't she listen to a perfectly justi-

fiable excuse? She ought to have inherited sense enough to realize that a successful doctor's time is not always his own. . . .

Young Doctor Dick buried his wrinkled brow in his hands at the nightmare memories of the bleak past two weeks, and slouched down in the understanding depths of the last pew. Dolly is unreasonable. . . . And to deliberately take up with that simp, Doc Denziger! . . . Why, he is not even one of us!

Young Doctor Dick blotted out all mental pictures and attempted to say some distracted prayers. These were not for himself so much. For the constant petition in them had to do with the request that the Good Lord would give a certain young woman a grain—one, small grain—of plain common horse sense.

Somehow, he felt better after that heartfelt prayer. But he must have been still thinking of other things than his prayers, for getting up to leave the last pew, he forgot utterly to pick up his doctor's case. It lay there, like a sleeping black poodle, on the darkened bench of the last pew.

Young Doctor Dick genuflected reverently in the middle aisle and then dropped a heavy piece of silver in the Poor Box by the church door, with the muttered request—"Don't forget, please, dear Lord, one grain!"

The last pew seemed to spend the next half hour in a brown study. None of the Devout Faithful interrupted its meditation. Some few came into the church for a visit, but these,

ignoring the place of the Publicans, swept up the center aisle and sought the seats of the Pharisees.

Then through the swinging church doors came a desirable young lady. She reached a daintily gloved hand and caressed the surface of the Holy Water font. Blessing herself piously, after the manner of "Sacred Heart" girls, she sought the sanctuary of the vacant last pew. Depositing her hand bag on the seat, she knelt up and buried her face in her hands.

At that very instant the kneeling bench of the last pew gave a little mouselike creak that might have been a wooden form of the ancient verb "Eureka!"

Most contented, this young lady at her devotions appeared to any chance observer. Yet, somehow, the last pew suspected otherwise. And if the last pew needed ample confirmation of its suspicions, that came when a tear, belonging to the young lady, escaped and lost itself in the depths of the last pew.

Obviously, things were not as they seemed in the last pew. . . .

An alien noise shattered the calm of the church interior and the young lady looked up.

Colored layers of light that slanted down from the western stained-glass windows lit up the sanctuary and the altar steps. Amid this glory struggled along an altar boy. He was attempting to carry a prie-dieu.

Maybe, it was because the light was tinted and one sees things out of focus when tears blur the sight, but the young lady thought this awkward altar boy had red hair.

Red hair is not an uncommon bit of personal property among those generous youngsters who have Tarcisius and John Berchmans for special Patrons. But as the altar boy, having deposited the prie-dieu before the altar, disappeared within the doorway that led to the sacristy, the tear-bedimmed young lady in the confidential old last pew, had a distinct remembrance of another red-haired altar boy.

Nor was he vested in the conventional scarlet cassock and snowy surplice. Nay, rather, this other torchy-topped lad was clothed in a gray striped and decidedly soiled baseball suit across the breast of which in red flowing script the world was invited to read: "St. Aloysius' Tigers."

Instead of kneeling at the foot of the altar, this other, head ablaze under the afternoon sun, was standing in the pitcher's box on "Old Man Shuman's lot," back of the church—the old sand lot diamond that had been parceled off into building lots a decade ago.

A little girl, who faintly forecasted the desirable young lady, was standing not idle on the base-lines. For the little girl, black curls flying, was shouting excitedly: "Strike him out, Dickie! Strike the smarty Denziger out! Oh! Dickie, please do!"

Then the little girl had ceased to coach and was screaming, for "the smarty Denziger" had "stepped into one," and the red-haired pitcher, who had attempted desperately to stop the drive, was dancing about the box, waving a red-hot finger, and he had forgotten utterly the important game and the bounding baseball.

And, later, the star pitcher of the "St. Aloysius' Tigers," with the ruins of her best cambric handkerchief about the injured finger, had been ignominiously knocked out of the box.

One puzzled "Third Ward Midget" in particular, had heard tigerish words from an indignant little girl, whose dark curls seemed to toss in emphatic approval of every syllable she shrilled.

Then a penitent little girl had sought this same last pew to examine her torn conscience. And she had whispered in the nearby Confessional: "About a hundred words no lady should utter, Father, when we lost this afternoon, at a boy who batted the ball that mashed Dickie Kane's finger, so that it wasn't his fault he couldn't pitch good any more."

The same young lady, kneeling devoutly in the last pew, straightened stiffly, for another memory had come into her mind.

It was herself, a taller miss this time, home on special leave from the "Sacred Heart." She had been jolly and smiling all through the heart-breaking minutes at the Station. Even after the slim, fiery-haired young Lieutenant had waved to her from the fast-receding Observation platform, she had forced the smile for Old Doctor Dick's sake. But once free, she had flown to this understanding last pew to pray her heart out. And she had come again and often, when the news arrived that his transport was sailing from Hoboken in the morning. In that anxious following August, when the whole town knew that their Division was at the Front, the last pew knew her daily. Again, she remembered the evening she had called

gayly across the street to Old Doctor Dick, "Any news of the hero?" He had beckoned her to come over and shown her the telegram the afternoon had brought from the War Department at Washington. Instinctively, she had sought the familiar last pew to pour out agonizing prayers for Young Doctor Dick, lying badly gassed in a far-away foreign land.

Young Doctor Dick, still pale and weak, had knelt with her here in this same pew that first Saturday after his homecoming. Together they had made their examination of conscience, and then taken their places in line, back of the last pew, waiting their turn in the Confessional. Together they had walked home afterward. . . . How enthusiastically had Young Doctor Dick told her first about the new partnership. "Dad's getting on, Dolly. Says he's been waiting all these years to turn his practice over to me. That simp Denziger tried to dig in while I was over there, but Dad and I'll put the skids under him. You watch and see."

Other pleasant memories came into her mind, kneeling there, seemingly at her devotions. But these all terminated abruptly at the night of the K. of C. Dance.

The new blue evening dress and he had never come! Never a word of explanation, and that tantalizing music that floated into her home from the brilliantly-lighted Parish Hall, half a square away! Why, he never even phoned next day!

Well she remembered, when, at length, the dark night of that long next day came, slipping over alone to the church and the last pew. It was too

much for human nature to endure. She'd never, never speak to Young Doctor Richard Kane again.

Then she met Doctor Denziger on her way home and they had stopped and talked. He called the next afternoon. She had not known he was so considerate. . . . Doctor Denziger kept calling. He had even escorted her here Saturday afternoon and waited most politely in the last pew while she went to Confession.

After that, Young Doctor Kane positively avoided her. He, too, had seen her on the avenue, and how coldly he raised his hat!

Yet Calvin was not one of us. . . . "Mrs. Calvin Denziger." It did not sound just orthodox in the ears of one christened "Dorothy Mary Sheehan."

Here the altar boy appeared again in the sacristy door and he banged another prie-dieu and placed it to the side of the former one.

Somehow, the sight of his radical auburn hair at this particular moment blurred the whole of the interior of the parish church.

Dolly Sheehan searched her pockets in vain. I must have dropped it in the street! Then she reached back for her bag. Maybe, there is an extra handkerchief there. It would never do to have red inflamed eyes walking the half square home in broad daylight!

She fumbled and opened the bag and her hand touched something cool and snaky.

Quickly looking down, Dolly discovered she was trespassing in a strange bag. There lay a coiled stethoscope and from the strange bag arose the

odors she always associated with the Infirmary at the Convent.

Telltale eyes were forgotten as she examined the strange bag and read the gold-stamped "R. K., M.D." on the side.

Something else within this bag caught her attention. It was a familiar-looking cambric handkerchief. It was torn and worn. She held it up and discovered, embroidered in the corner, the initials "D. S."

The very idea!

Very determinedly, she possessed herself of this wreck of her girlhood and immediately put it on active service again.

Then somewhat guiltily Miss Dorothy Sheehan closed the strange bag and abandoned it to its fate on the last pew.

As she picked up her own bag, preparatory to leaving, she looked up and saw her pastor and two couples coming out of the sacristy.

She had no trouble in recognizing the five and their business in the sanctuary. So that's the fellow from St. Andrew's Parish Minnie Davis is marrying in the morning? But which is the groom and which the best man?

The four principals in the coming ceremony grouped about the priest on the altar, while the red-haired altar boy, an interested unofficial observer, that he might miss nothing, impersonated a leaning tower in the doorway.

Dolly herself watched proceedings with deep interest.

She heard the organist move about overhead

and then came the first soft tones as the organ "warmed up" for its rehearsal.

Then Dolly started, for the very last young man in the world she desired to meet at that moment, genuflected in the aisle and knelt in the last pew beside her.

She became very devout, her eyes fixed on distant things.

"Pardon, Dolly," whispered Young Doctor Dick, "but I forgot my case——"

"Don't take this one, Doctor Kane," she warned, reaching hastily for her own black bag. "Possibly, that's yours on the bench."

"Thanks, Dolly, for minding it," began Young Doctor Dick conversationally. "That was characteristic——"

"Hush! for mercy sake! Don't you know better than to talk in church?"

"May I pray, then?" meekly asked her companion, burying his respectable auburn locks in his hands, "I'm troubled and need light and guidance——"

"Hush! will you?" whispered Dolly, in an imperative aside, as she realized that this audible prayer might take a very personal trend.

"If you do insist on praying out loud, Doctor Kane, so that everybody in church may hear you, let me out, please."

But Young Doctor Dick might have been carved in pious marble, as he knelt up, effectively blocking all exit from the last pew. His gaze was now fixed on the bridal party under the sanctuary light. The pastor was showing the nervous groom-to-be how to place the ring on the bride-to-

be's finger, and the red-haired altar boy had become one broad appreciative grin.

Young Doctor Dick took his eyes hastily away from the peace-destroying tableau and said earnestly:

"Listen, Dolly, you have to. The reason I never came for you the night of the K. of C. Dance was, I forgot all about our engagement——"

"I don't care to hear another word. Remember you're in church, Doctor Kane, and let me pass." This last was hissed.

"Dolly, I had an accident call and when I got home that night, there was another—Dad wasn't feeling well—and I never returned till dawn. I intended to call and explain. Then you started gallivanting around with that horse doctor——"

"Doctor Richard Kane!"

"Yes; you did too. You know it!"

Young Doctor Dick stopped suddenly.

In the loft overhead that fool organist had started to play the opening bars of "O Promise Me."

Dolly hastily sought for her handkerchief. The bridal party of the morrow would be coming down the main aisle in a few minutes—Minnie Davis had the sharpest tongue in the parish—and to be caught with red eyes in this ridiculous, impossible situation!

Then she remembered the only handkerchief she had with her was the torn remnant she had taken from Young Doctor Kane's case. She'd face Minnie before she'd confess to that abstraction.

Dolly glanced at the flaming haired young doctor who knelt so forlornly at her side.

Then it hadn't been his fault at all that night. . . .

The pastor was giving the rehearsal party final instructions.

Somehow, all the memories of this last pew seemed to come back in a flood and sweep over Dolly. "St. Aloysius' Tigers" . . . "badly gassed" . . .

In their rush was washed away her two weeks' pride, dissolved was her resentment, drowned her troubles. Without difficulty she swallowed "one grain of plain common horse sense."

She begged with a little catch in her voice:

"Dick, lend me your handkerchief at once, please."

Silence is golden at times, and also most eloquent.

Young Doctor Dick produced a folded pocket handkerchief and under cover of the last pew reached it over.

The organist in the loft, seemingly encouraged, was swelling into the grand chords of the Wedding March from Lohengrin.

Minnie Davis' party stepped solemnly down the aisle and passed a devout couple in the last pew, apparently lost in perpetual adoration.

When Minnie's voice was heard in the vestibule of the church, Young Doctor Dick turned to his companion.

"Dolly," he whispered in a husky voice, "my machine is outside. Let's slip downtown and buy

Minnie Davis a couple of gross of cambric handkerchiefs for a wedding gift.”

“Oh! Dickie!” was what she gasped, but, somehow, that diminutive contained pardon, contrition, and a happy augury for the immediate future.

At least, so it seemed to the worn old last pew, as, custodian of a couple of forgotten bags, it heard the two pass through the swinging church doors to the swelling strains of a full organ. “Here comes the Bride!”

THE RIGHT DECISION

THE big black machine slowed down noiselessly as they neared the foot of Seventy-Second Street; once straightened into Riverside Drive, with the busy blue Hudson partially visible beyond the park greenery, Dick Fenno threw in the clutch and his mother nervously grasped his arm.

"Son, son, we're not in all that hurry. Remember this was for 'a quiet spin' you inveigled me out. I guess, Dick, my racing days are over," she confessed, with a sigh of relief, as the car dutifully dropped to a more moderate speed.

"Oh, I forgot. Sis and the other girls always like to hit it up when we strike The Drive." He added a moment later, "If you'd been an Indian lady, mother, they'd surely have called you 'Mrs. She-likes-the-low-speed' or 'Creeping car' or——"

"Thank you, Dick, but my Christian names suit me perfectly," said his mother, readjusting her gray veil. "I'll be very glad when you go away to college next month, and you and your—what is the word?—craze for making Twentieth Century time on New York streets will be somewhat checked, though I'll miss my little boy greatly."

Mrs. Fenno glanced affectionately on the tall bronzed youth with the squared-rigged shoulders; and that sickening sense of coming separation returned.

Dick gave her hand a mighty squeeze.

“So will I miss my ‘scary’ parent.”

“Mother,” he began abruptly, after they had gone a couple of blocks, “why won’t you give your consent to Cornwall? It’s the best U. in the State, and the fellows who go there are dandy chaps. You’ve met Ed Cortlandt and ‘Hi’ Hazard and other Cornwall chaps. Why, Ed promised the other day that he’d put me up for his ‘frat,’ and he belongs to the swellest house. And then father’s a Cornwall grad, and why don’t you want me to attend the same university?”

Mrs. Fenno began to understand why she had been asked for the “quiet spin.”

“Richard, my child, I’ve had reasons to know perfectly well your father is an alumnus of Cornwall, but remember, he didn’t have the opportunity for Catholic education in his day that you have in yours. You know I have nothing against young Cortlandt or Hazard; they’re gentlemanly boys, but, Dick, they’re not of our Faith, and so this question does not affect them.”

His mother watched the white heights of Grant’s Tomb loom ahead, and the straggling few visitors drift up and down the broad white steps.

“Why I want you to go to Holy Cross, son, is because,”—she thought of her weak-kneed Catholic husband—“I want you to be a practical Catholic, well grounded in your religion. At Cornwall

you'd get a first-class education. They'd turn you out a polished gentleman, but they wouldn't send you forth a strong Catholic, because they can't give what they haven't got, and, Dick, that's why I'll never consent to your going to that, or any non-Catholic college."

Dick sat sulkily erect and steered in silence. The question of where he would matriculate next month was still unsettled, and he had his father's word that the final decision rested with his mother. All at once his face brightened, and he turned the car sharply into the curb, as he shouted:

"Father, hey! Father Flanigan!"

A large priest, with keen, kindly eyes, stopped in his walk; then lifted his hat as he recognized the occupants of the panting automobile.

"Why! Mrs. Fenno, and Dick! Where did you drop from? I thought you were miles away in the cool mountains this hot August, or I'd have been up to the house."

"No, Father," said Dick, opening the door of the tonneau and waving the priest to a seat, "we beat it back from the White Mountains some days ago."

"But, Father, what brings you to New York?" questioned Mrs. Fenno, half turning in her seat.

"A retreat at Manhattanville," replied the Jesuit missionary, as he settled back in the cushions. "I was out for a little walk, and I don't mind if you do take me back. I have a meditation to give some good ladies at five, and it would never do to be late."

The machine started ahead.

“Let me see, when was the last time we met, Dick?”

“The night I graduated from Xavier High, Father.”

“Is it as long ago as that? Last June. Oh, I remember now. Evening clothes, blushing grads, white diplomas, proud mamma, and all that sort. But where does he go next month, Mrs. Fenno?”

“Father, we were just discussing that question when Dick hailed you.” Mrs. Fenno spoke eagerly, for she knew what influence this old teacher had over her son. “He wants to go to Cornwall, and I want him to enter Holy Cross.”

“What’s this, Dick?” said the priest gravely, leaning forward and laying his arm on the boy’s shoulder. “You don’t want to let the glitter of that university blind you.

“Believe me, I haven’t been a priest so many years, but I’ve learnt one thing.” He spoke slowly. “The majority of the Catholic lads who enter Cornwall, leave it—well, they’re not Catholics when they graduate. That’s all. You go where you belong, Dick. America for the Americans and Catholic colleges for Catholics.

“A mother told me a sad case recently, and it was of this same Cornwall. Her son, a sophomore, was stricken down while she and the family were abroad. Those in his fraternity house called in the best doctors available, but they never told the neighboring priest, and the Catholic boy died two days later without the Sacraments. ‘Ah, if I had sent him to one of our own colleges,’ she confessed to me, the tears streaming down her face, ‘that couldn’t have happened.’

"But, Dick," the priest went on lightly, noticing his troubled expression, "you don't look on the verge of sudden or lingering death. What do you weigh now, lad?"

"One seventy-eight. Not so bad for nineteen, hey, Father?"

"Fine, fine. You go to Worcester, as your mother wishes, and I'll wager you'll make the eleven. I happen to know," added Father Flanigan, who sometimes found it useful to follow college athletics, "that both the 'Purple' tackles graduated last June. That's your position."

Dick thought of the star tackle of Xavier High and modestly blushed.

"Then go to Holy Cross and make good. I'll drop up this fall and see you in a 'Purple' uniform. But here we are at Manhattanville already and I must go back to my retreatants."

The machine swung into the Sacred Heart grounds and left Father Flanigan. As they sped home Dick kept silence till they neared the house, then he turned to his parent:

"Mother, it's Holy Cross for me. Father Flanigan knows what he's talking about, and he's dead right when he said: 'Catholics for Catholic colleges.' And what's more, I'm going to fill one of those tackle positions, or know the reason why."

Mrs. Fenno went up the stone steps of her home, realizing that "the quiet spin" and its chance meeting with Dick's former professor, had won her private fight for Catholic education.

September saw the flying departure of Dick and his trunk for Holy Cross, and then Mrs. Fenno plunged into preparations for the European trip

that the father had promised Dick's sister on her finishing at Manhattanville.

Mother and daughter sailed for the sunny Mediterranean and the sightseeing months in the south of Europe flashed by till, late in February, Mr. Fenno took a hasty trip abroad and joined his wife and Grace in London.

The three were seated in their room in the Hotel Cecil, looking across the foggy Thames, as the father related glowing accounts of Dick and the Holy Cross chums he had down to the New York home for the Christmas vacation.

"One of those boys," said Mr. Fenno, enthusiastically, "a clear-eyed young fellow, was telling me that Dick was the football 'find' of the season. He practically won the Fordham game, and for one thing, mother, I never saw him looking better. He's in splendid health."

"Maybe that's the reason Dick finds no time to answer any of our letters," snapped his sister, with a toss of her head.

While they were talking a bellboy rapped and handed Mr. Fenno a cable just received at the hotel office.

"Hello, what have we here?" exclaimed the father, running his finger through the envelope. "Maybe, Grace, this is Dick's answer to your last letter."

His brow contracted as he read and reread the white sheet.

"I can't make anything out of this. Something unexpected must have happened, or Henderson would never——"

“What’s wrong?” asked his wife anxiously. “I hope nothing serious.”

Mr. Fenno handed her the cable, and Grace read it aloud over her mother’s shoulder.

“ ‘Return New York first steamer. Henderson.’ ”

“Henderson’s your lawyer, isn’t he?” said Grace, taking the cable to examine it closer.

“Yes; and I don’t see why he sent such a message. He knows I intended to sail with you next Saturday on the *Carnatic*. It must be that blamed New Amsterdam deal.

“Well, mother and Grace, business before pleasure. That cuts out our three days in London.”

Mr. Fenno reached for the European edition of the *Herald* and scanned the sailings.

“Capital. The *Mauretania* sails to-morrow, and we’ll go by her,” and he took up the phone.

Later in the day came another cable, in answer to a message asking for particulars, but it only said:

“Presence necessary. Cable steamer sailing.”

The three boarded the *Mauretania* at Liverpool, and the giant Cunarder made her usual quick passage.

Coming down the gangplank, Mr. Fenno caught sight of his lawyer’s bald head among the expectant crowd on the pier. Mr. Henderson saw them at the same moment, and he touched the arm of his companion and pointed.

“Why, Father Flanigan, you here!” cried Grace Fenno, recognizing the missionary, as he came forward with her father’s lawyer. “This is an unexpected pleasure.”

“Did Dick send you to represent him?” asked the mother.

Father Flanigan did not answer at once.

“No; my friend, Henderson,” he said pleasantly, shaking hands, “told me he was to meet you to-day, and I took the liberty of joining him. I’m going to ride up to the house with you, too, if you don’t mind,” and he led Mrs. Fenno to the waiting limousine.

On the way uptown the priest kept Grace and her mother busy describing their travels, while Mr. Fenno and his lawyer conversed in low tones.

Arriving at the brown-stone home on 64th Street, Mr. Fenno stopped his daughter on the threshold.

“Come into the library, Grace, with Mr. Henderson and myself.”

She followed, wondering how suddenly aged her father looked.

“We’ll leave you, mother,” he called back with forced gayety, “to entertain Father Flanigan for a while.”

“And that will be just what I want,” said Mrs. Fenno, ushering the priest into the drawing room. “I’m dying to hear about Dick. You saw him recently, Father?”

She sank into a chair by the window.

Father Flanigan nodded as he crossed the room to draw the curtain lower.

“Quite recently. I happened to be giving a mission at the Sacred Heart Church, Worcester—that’s right below the college—and, Mrs. Fenno, I’ll always think it was most providential——”

“Why do you say that, Father?”

“—that I was near Holy Cross at the time.”

“Oh, his father was telling us in London how splendid he looked. The picture of health. I think I’ll run up to Holy Cross myself soon and see him.”

“That won’t be necessary,” said Father Flanigan gravely, moving his chair nearer. “Our Lord sometimes asks big sacrifices of us, Mrs. Fenno. Big sacrifices,” he repeated, looking her straight in the eyes, “big sacrifices, Mrs. Fenno.”

Mrs. Fenno half rose from her seat and the color left her face.

“Is—is my Dick sick?”

But she read the real truth in the priest’s countenance.

“He’s not——”

Father Flanigan bowed his head, and in the stillness that followed she could hear Grace sobbing in the library. The priest took her hand.

“Mrs. Fenno, that was the cable’s meaning. We thought it better to break it to you at home. Dick went off with pneumonia very suddenly. The Rector phoned me to the Sacred Heart Church, and when I was able to come, he had already been anointed. I asked him if he was resigned to dying when all of you were abroad, and he told me smilingly: ‘It’s hard, Father, but that must be the particular sacrifice our Lord asks of me, and, oh, I’m willing to give Him anything.’

“I gave him the Holy Viaticum and he died within the hour, peacefully, resignedly. You needn’t worry about Dick, Mrs. Fenno.”

The mother’s lips were moving in her first

prayer for her dead son; then after a space she looked up through her tears.

“I’ll thank God all my days, Father, that He strengthened me to stand firm for a Catholic college. Oh, he might have died without the Sacraments at Cornwall.”

“Yes, Mrs. Fenno, you have reason to be thankful. Though Dick was called very suddenly, you will always have the consolation of knowing he went well prepared, and God alone knows how it might have been among non-Catholic surroundings.” And the priest arose to escort the stricken mother to the heart-broken two in the library.

THE KINDLY OLD GENTLEMAN

INSTINCTIVELY Josephine genuflected at the head of the main aisle and turned to the right. She knelt at the altar-rails and raising her eyes trustingly, looked into the calm familiar features of the Kindly Old Gentleman. Since her "pig-tail" days, Josephine had been accustomed to come and kneel here whenever she wanted something special. And now she did want something very special.

Save for the periodic movements of the penitents by the confessionals, it was confidentially quiet in the church and the warm lights from "The Flight into Egypt" window cast still shadows on the set face of the Kindly Old Gentleman and made him appear particularly paternal. Holding his marble lily as a royal scepter he listened and never seemed to offer an objection when Josephine suggested that there was one who worked in the same office with her, and might he do?

The Kindly Old Gentleman never expressed surprise, when Josephine whispered the name of this particular one. But the changing afternoon light, straining through the stained-glass window, suddenly brightened the statue's features into almost a smile and with the transformation an an-

noying remembrance arose in Josephine's mind. It was the gently ironic question Father Morini had put to her a few minutes before:

"My child, are you seriously thinking of going through life as Mrs. *Luther* Howricks?"

Somehow, the Kindly Old Gentleman seemed now to be repeating her confessor's query. Josephine dropped her eyes to the altar-rails. Then she whispered, though no objection had been raised:

"Well, my Blessed patron, I know he's not one of us, but there isn't anybody else."

The Kindly Old Gentleman pondered this limitation, till Josephine spoke petulantly:

"Well, if you also object to me becoming Mrs. ——" Somehow, in this orthodox presence she could not bring herself to use that heretical name, so she substituted: "becoming Mrs. Josephine Howricks, you'll have to throw a nice young man in my way. Do you hear me?"

He made no reply and after a pause, his client continued:

"You know yourself, they're scarce as a million gold dollars in this old town."

Nor did he even nod his disbelief that such kind were "scarce as a million gold dollars."

Josephine looked up at him, partly ashamed of her small outburst of impatience, and said humbly:

"O my own Saint, help me to meet an eligible one in your own way! You know you never, never fail me."

Lavishing a filial smile on the Kindly Old Gentleman, that should have gone a long way toward

softening his marble heart, Josephine blessed herself piously.

By the curb in front of the broad stone steps of St. Joseph's Church stood two vacant machines; one long and luxurious, the other small, square and serviceable.

Josephine had passed the aristocratic one, when on sudden impulse she halted beside its lowly sister. She searched in the shallow depths of her mystery bag and brought out a tiny thing. It was a crude metal libel, alleged to be a likeness of the Kindly Old Gentleman. Very deliberately Josephine approached the curb and flipped the alleged likeness into the forward part of the small, serviceable car. Nobody noticed Josephine's action, except possibly an elderly sparrow who narrowly escaped assassination. Josephine herself offered the indignant ruffled bird no explanation of her action, though when she crossed the Avenue and entered the ground of St. Joseph's Hospital, she did remark within the hearing of another large statue of the Kindly Old Gentleman, these cryptic words:

"Now, my Father Patron, you please ride around and pick me out a reliable, easy, economical, nice dear, or else—"

As she walked up the driveway that curved around the statue's green island, the rest was mumbled. But the stony ears of the statue must certainly have caught the heretical name, "Luther."

The Kindly Old Gentleman, who was invisible partner in most of the good works performed in that neighborhood, had been gazing across the Avenue into the vestibule of his namesake church,

maybe, a quarter of an hour. His gray venerable figure might be said to have been in a brown study, as he watched other penitents and clients come out and pass on their ways.

Two old ladies stopped to gossip in the vestibule and a skipping lassie and an obvious altar boy circled around them. A languid couple appeared leisurely in the church doorway. Leisurely they descended and leisurely the long, luxurious machine rolled away.

Then on the top steps of St. Joseph's Church appeared an alert young man. He was evidently a particularly nice young man. He had a clean-cut serious face and eternally laughing eyes that frankly smiled straight across the Avenue into the face of the watching statue. Though he wore blue civilian clothes there was a military set to his shoulders that bespoke olive drab in recent years. There was almost a boyish rush to the way he raced down the broad steps and sprang into the small, serviceable car at the curb. This nice young man pressed buttons and pushed levers. The Avenue was almost deafened by the noise that arose. Then with increasing speed the small, serviceable car crossed the avenue diagonally and swung noisily into the hospital grounds.

Josephine, her charitable call on old crippled Mrs. Mason over, was coming down the driveway that divided around the entrance. She heard a small serviceable car approaching and had a fleeting wish that she might be seated in the vacant seat this glorious afternoon. As the auto came nearer, she stepped toward the statue's flowered

plot to give it leeway. Then she retreated hurriedly into the tulip bed, for the machine had most impulsively swung toward her. She saw a nice young face grow pale before her eyes.

Josephine came into full possession of her vocal chords; for the small, serviceable car was ruining many bright tulips. Then it bumped most irrelevantly into the pedestal of the Kindly Old Gentleman's statue and its nice young occupant came hurtling by her head. The next second, out of the sky something violent (it felt like the Hospital building or a major portion of the moon), struck her arm. Shortly after, both Josephine and the nice young man were carried into St. Joseph's Hospital utterly unconscious of all the excitement they were causing.

Later, the car, smaller and evidently less serviceable, was hauled away. The neighborhood departed, its youth last. While the statue of the Kindly Old Gentleman lay all that night at the base of its pedestal with its face buried in a totally wrecked tulip bed.

* * * * *

Josephine, with her left arm and its sling making a white triangle before her, had come up to the sun parlor to think. Her mood was sadly out of keeping with the warm bright golden glow that flooded the glassed enclosure. All her present thoughts were overcast and cloudy gray and they linked back to a chance remark a fellow stenographer had made while paying a visit to Josephine. For her caller had reminiscently observed:

“Luther is a dear boy. Just imagine, Josie, he has taken me to two shows this week!”

When her caller went, Josephine took a large bouquet that stood on her bureau and dumped it into the wastebasket. Then she had sought the solace of the sun parlor. She watched, without seeing them, the myriad flat roofs, broken by an occasional spire or aërial ad, while little green thoughts were dancing like little green demons on the lawn of her mind. By-and-by, a pleasant voice spoke at her side:

“I beg your pardon, Miss, but I believe we met last week by St. Joseph’s statue.”

Josephine faced the pale convalescent, who had silently wheeled up his chair from the far end of the sun parlor. She managed to smile and say:

“Oh!”

Somehow, this nice young man considered this a formal introduction and an invitation to justify his recent misconduct. His account ran on smoothly, as though he had retold it for the hundredth time. He explained how he had just come from Confession (wasn’t it providential?), and he was late for an hospital appointment, so he had started the small, serviceable car in a hurry—it was so reliable, a dog could run it—when that most amazing steering disobedience happened in the driveway. Then he added:

“But the garage sleuths at the auto hospital dug out the root of the difficulty. Look at this, Miss.”

He held out something in his hand.

“Some crazy fool idiot deliberately placed this

unbaptized slug in my gear while I was in church. Can you believe that? Now I ask you, Miss."

"What is it?" questioned Josephine innocently, and the nice young man held up his palm.

"Here, what do you make of it? Blessed if I know! There were some peculiar markings on it, almost as if it were an image once, but the boys assured me it caused all the damage, the distressing trouble, that hectic afternoon."

The nice young man was looking at Josephine so obviously that she had a passing suspicion he really did not believe the accident had been so troublesome. She dropped her eyes to that which lay in her unharmed hand. Then she gave a gasp that startled the nice young man considerably. For though the pagan slug was mashed almost unrecognizably, Josephine recognized what it had been. She felt very faint. She said, "Oh!" again, and almost threw back at the nice young man his "unbaptized slug."

She fled the sun parlor, leaving behind her a most bewildered convalescent, who kept looking at the tiny metal in his hand and then at the empty doorway. The next remark of the nice young man showed clearly that he had not as yet succeeded in breaking himself of a habit of words he had acquired while in his country's service overseas.

* * * * *

It was ten days later and the weather prediction that morning had read, "Light rains this afternoon." Despite this clean weather warning, Josephine left the office early, for she had decided she must confide her horrible secret to Father

Morini. She stopped at the tiny florist's, a few squares from the church, and when she emerged she carried a long oblong box. Within it, were the tall favorite flowers, destined to wither devoutly before the Kindly Old Gentleman's statue.

For once the Weather Bureau was correct and "the light rains" commenced to fall heavily. St. Joseph's Church was across the Avenue, but a gray barrage of water made that dripping edifice temporarily as inaccessible as lofty Everest. Josephine fled for shelter into the handy hospital and prayed fervently that fate and the angels would keep a particularly nice young inmate of that hospital out of the visitors' parlor.

Without, the "light rain" came down as in the earlier days of Noe's cruise. Through the windows Josephine caught a splashy view of the repainted statue of the Kindly Old Gentleman, now restored to its place of honor between the hospital driveway. Then out of this torrential downpour appeared on the Avenue a small, serviceable car. Its bright gray tires and shiny black body proclaimed its recent departure from Detroit. It turned into one of the circular torrents and taxied up to the hospital's covered entrance.

Josephine caught the welcome voice of Father Morini in the corridor. She hurried across the parlor and called him. When she had revealed her horrid secret, Father Morini said irrelevantly:

"I happen to know that eligible young driver." Josephine thought within herself that her confessor put an entirely unnecessary accent on the middle adjective. "He's the able President of the Young Men's Sodality and he has been speak-

ing of you repeatedly. It seems he's very much worried about some unintentional offense he gave you in the sun parlor the other day."

"I never want to see him again," declared Josephine emphatically. "I'd die."

Father Morini looked at the damp box that Josephine still held. Then he said suddenly:

"Well, before you depart from our midst, my child, why not place these lilies before your patron's statue yourself? Say, as a thank offering. Gratitude is always rewarded."

"In this rain, Father? I'd get wet as the ocean crossing the Avenue."

Father Morini's only reply was:

"It's clearing already. Come with me."

And he escorted her to the covered entrance of the hospital.

The storm had stopped as suddenly as it had begun and a rainbow of majestic curve spanned the heavens from the hospital to the church. Josephine exclaimed:

"Oh!"

But it was not the rainbow's beauty that occasioned that exclamation. There stood a brand new small serviceable car and in the driver's seat sat the President of the Young Men's Sodality. The priest helped Josephine in. Then he said to the driver:

"Joe, please leave these flowers on the altar-rails in the church and then drive this young lady to the proper corner for her trolley. That is, if it's not too much bother."

The nice young man winked at the rainbow and

then he looked at Josephine, as he said to Father Morini:

“Sure, Father, but why the trolley corner only? It will be a pleasure for me to drive her home. That is, if she doesn’t mind.”

And this time the nice young man did not bother looking at the great rainbow in the skies. Then Father Morini remembered to introduce them, and Josephine again said: “Oh!” when she learnt the nice young man’s surname.

The Avenue glistened refreshed and the church front sparrows were chirping joyously as the machine steered obediently past the site of its predecessor’s unfortunate disobedience. Father Morini watched its progress and he smiled a peculiar smile when the small serviceable car stopped across the Avenue. He saw Joseph Ford, carrying a box of lilies and, despite his limp, gallantly escorting Josephine into the church vestibule.

Father Morini prognosticated loud enough to be heard by the Kindly Old Gentleman, who stood restored on his pedestal before the hospital:

“Holy Matchmaker of this parish, our Married Men’s and Women’s Sodalties will gain two recruits shortly or—”

Whatever followed that “or” is lost, but it certainly was not that heretical name, “Luther.”

THE DESIRED DAY

A YOUNG mother sat in the low, easy chair by the open fireplace; her baby, warm and rosy in blue and white, in her arms. Their dancing shadows, like the wings of angels, fluttered noiselessly against the dim walls of the grate-lit room.

“Soon my tiny philosopher will speak, and tell Mother what are the grave thoughts he thinks all day long.”

The round-eyed philosopher crowed and stretched pudgy fingers toward the golden coals.

Then this mother, like the mothers of every clime, fell to musing on the future of her child.

Again the baby on her lap reached toward the waving flames, and something in his posture made her castle-building picture the group of Our Lady of Purgatory, that she loved to pray before at Holy Souls'. Catching up a gray shawl, she let it trail over her shoulders, and, lifting the dear bundle to her knee, enclosed the small hand and raised it blessingly, as did the Lady in the group, over the restless waves before them. Now she was the Pitying Mother and her little boy the Bambino.

The babe crowed and the fond mother-eyes thought they saw the puny right hand make of its own accord a rude blessing.

She clasped the hands, tiny palms up, and, as though they were freshly anointed, touched them, murmuring: "Prayer is almighty and God is good. Perhaps, perhaps my little Paul will be some day." Then ever so reverently she drew her wee son toward her to whisper: "Father Paul. Father Paul."

A quiet boy, barefooted, in blue overalls and open-throated white shirt, lay coiled up in the wide bench of the vine-draped summer-house. The late summer sun checkered through the western wall, gilding in spots the bright cushions and the boy, lost in his reading.

A "yellow jacket" buzzed noisily, ominously near, but sheered off as the reader drew his knife swiftly through the uncut leaves.

Finally, with a sigh as though regretfully leaving a loved one, he let the book drop to the gravel, and, uncoiling back, with lowered lids and browned arms under brown curly hair, he dreamed again the scene. It stood out clear: The slim child-hand guarding the Treasure that lay above his throbbing heart; the rude hails, "Join us in our game, Tarcisius!" and the young Bearer of the Mysteries' repeated refusals; the curiosity and the anger, and there at the pleasant Roman roadside the vain tearing and the rain of blows. Then the burly Quadratus breaking through and lifting the limp lad that, like a crushed ciborium, still clasps his Treasure unprofaned.

"So here's where my blue-eyed dreamer of dreams is! I knew it."

The boy came back to the present, for he had not heard the soft tread across the lawn.

"And is that the way Paul treats my birthday gift? Doesn't he care for 'Fabiola'?" She slid the half-finished cassock off her arm and, stooping, placed the discarded book alongside it on the circular bench.

"You bet he does! But say, Mom, that Tarcisius was a boy in a hundred! Gee! I'd like to have known him, wouldn't you, Mom?"

The little mother had seated herself across the round summer-house and her needle was busy on a final seam of the brilliant garment.

"Why, Bunny, I have—for years," and she smiled, thinking of her nightly prayer to this patron of altar boys.

"Just think, Mom, it took nerve to tell that gang of kids to chase themselves, an' then when they didn't— Gee! that musta hurt! But good old Quadratus! He was a regular Irish cop, he was, and he certainly cleaned 'em up."

The little mother dropped her labor of love and laughed merrily. "That's true, dear. He does bear a striking resemblance to an Irish cop."

She held the cassock at arm's length."

"Get up, Lazy Bones, and see how this new one fits."

It set well across the shoulders and trailed the right length behind. The scarlet figure paraded solemnly around the summer-house and, stopping before the admiring face, raised his right hand, blessing in the triple manner cardinals do.

The little mother's eyes filled, and she as solemnly bowed her head.

“Does My Eminence look all right?”

She glanced up, catching the roguish twist at the corners of his mouth.

“Provided Your Eminence’s hair would ‘come to order,’ and,” she caught a glimpse of a row of toes, “provided Our Venerable Brother’s feet were shod—yes.” Then, hastily, “Give me that. Dance at Your Eminence’s peril!”

When Paul lacked two months of seventeen, and his father had been dead half a year, he graduated, sixth in his class, from Xavier High. And it was the night of graduation, as they sat in the big, still dining-room—Harry and sleepy Francie having been lunched and kissed and sent yawning upstairs—that Paul first told the little mother definitely.

Then, because she was very happy, she cried, and Paul made her promise solemnly not to tell a soul, “not even Harry and the kid,” just yet.

They closed the brown-stone city house and in the cool of the tree-hidden home at Glen Cove passed the days of that last summer together.

Out on the misty Sound Paul taught Harry how to handle the racing cat. Then, when Harry had proved himself an able sailor in two squalls, and they were returning one glorious evening, skirting the yellow-cliffed Long Island shore, Paul told his brother and, near to tears, made him a present of the well-beloved *Sea Scamp*.

Then impish Francie was let into the big secret, and he promptly begged his older brother to teach him swimming before he went. So each day, in the clear, green water at the top of the flood,

Francie solved the mysteries of the "dead man's float," the "dog paddle," that "awful hard" leg stroke and — memorable afternoon! — made his first brave attempt across deep water and landed, gasping and gleeful, in the outstretched arms of Paul.

The little mother smiled much, and prayed more, those dwindling days, and she and her eldest took long, confidential walks in the breezing shadows of the August evenings, her arm clinging lovingly to his, and she spoke in wondrous, grateful manner of the great gift that the dear Lord was giving her first-born and herself.

Very simply, leaving two sniffing boys and a black-gowned figure that waved bravely as long as the rear car was in view, Paul broke the home ties.

Now the strange, joyous, hidden life of the novitiate closed over Paul and he became "Brother McManus." Twice, during the four years he spent there, the little mother came to see him: During the first Villa, and he noted the reverence with which she fingered his old, greenish habit and the chain of beads that hung at his side; and again, Vow Day, when she shared with him the joy of heaven for an afternoon.

Paul was nearing the end of his third-year philosophy when he went home for the first time — the May impish Francie was drowned on his class picnic — and he knew his presence was a tangible comfort to the little mother, who forgot her grief in preparing with her own hands the old favorite dishes.

During the five years of his regency — the two

at Gonzaga and the three at Holy Cross—regularly as Saturday she wrote, and in the leisure of an occasional Sunday afternoon he replied. His letters were filled with the incidents of the classroom, the treat of an auto trip; and hers, bulky and extra postaged, told the gossip of home and friends, but they always ended with the prayer that he would prove faithful for the great day to come.

And when, his teaching over, he was sent back to the scholasticate, and that goal grew near, the faithful letters betrayed more and more the longing of the years.

She came to see him the Easter before ordination—the same little figure in widow's weeds, and she seemed so worried to find a few stray gray hairs among his curly brown—though hers were a snow-driven white now—and she scolded him, hand on his arm, for studying too hard. He laughed her fears away, assuring her his work would soon be over, but she corrected him in the gay way of old, telling him his work had not begun yet.

At the close of the visit, as they waited on the platform for the Baltimore train, she made him stoop low and, on tiptoe raising herself, signed him, repeating the words he remembered so well—"Now, Cross of Christ about you, beloved Paul."

Then the local whistled beyond the bend and in the approaching rumble he heard her say:

"Paul, dear, it's less than three months off now, and, oh, it seems longer than all these years. But I'll be there, if I have to come on my knees

from purgatory. Sure, blessed Heaven couldn't hold me away that morning!"

He kissed her and lifted her aboard, and notwithstanding the conductor's protests, she stayed on the platform, looking back, till the train swept around the second bend.

On a Sunday afternoon in early June the message came, and they hurried him to Baltimore through the rain and the clinging red of the Frederick Pike. Never will Paul forget the eternity of that night, when the express snailed across the black meadows of Jersey.

Harry met him at the door—a Harry with red, swollen eyes—and Paul knew.

She lay, as he turned down the white sheet, peaceful and twenty years younger; the smile of glad recognition still on her lips.

"Why! Mother was well as you and I, Paul, only this morning." Harry was taking the straw hat his brother dazedly carried. "After Mass she said she felt a bit weak and would rest. Mary found her quite ill; the doctor came, and he sent the telegram at once.

"She spoke mostly of you and she was saying this was nothing, and she'd be all right in time for the Big Day, when the heart stopped."

After the plain, flowerless funeral—her will was insistent on these points—Paul and his great loneliness went back to the scholasticate, and two weeks later he and the other "ordinandi" were subdeacons one day and deacons the next.

That evening Harry's wife, with the white-clad, bare-kneed Junior, came, and they brought word

that Harry was hurrying to the Chicago office, and sent regrets. And so in the morning the two were all the relatives that saw Paul kneel in his turn at the feet of the frail, bent Cardinal; receive the sacred anointing, the mystic laying on of hands, and the tremendous powers of the Chalice and the Keys.

When the Mass was over, the semicircle of freshly ordained broke and passed among the pews; each giving his first blessing to his own beloved group. Then it was that Father Paul, seeing but a brother's wife and little son, broke down.

But he blessed the two bowed heads—as he blessed many another on corridor and stairs that day—with his thoughts far away, for he was thinking of the one who had waited in prayer and patience through the long, long years for this first blessing.

Down in the mortuary chapel, that stands a white octagon centering the simple cemetery of his Order, Father Paul, in red, for it was Peter and Paul's day, said his First Mass for her.

A nervous, distracting Junior, who had learned the Latin specially for the occasion, served him, and a favorite old professor, standing by in surplice, had to assist him only once, and that was when he hesitated, as all young priests do, before he pronounced the Words.

As he straightened after the Consecration, there came over him the feeling that she was near—such a feeling as he used to experience in the long ago, when she came to his bedside for the forgotten kiss. And with this conviction that she

was by, the loneliness of the past few weeks, like sun-touched mist, rolled up.

Trembling, he gave the two—Harry's wife and the server—Holy Communion, and all the time he could not, he did not try to, shake off the joyous sense that one saw with satisfaction his ministrations.

But his joy was destined to overflow. With a light heart he had prayed at the Postcommunion that peace and eternal light might be hers. Then he came to the center of the altar, swung around for the "*Dominus Vobiscum*," heard his nephew at his feet, and saw the boy's mother, deep in her Thanksgiving. Through the open doorway showed the straight gravel path to the cemetery gates; a plump robin hopping in the barred shadows.

Then—all unknowingly—he kissed the altar stone and began the Last Blessing. As he turned with raised hand, "*Pater et Filius*," he stopped. The open doorway had been blotted out. There, under his raised hand, in the glow of a glorious dawn, knelt the little mother. Familiar, yet strange, were her features, and in her face, written large in lines of living light, was perfect peace.

She looked straight at him—her priest of God at the altar—then the head bent contentedly, and he was saying, "*et Spiritus Sanctus*," completing his blessing. Then he was gazing through the open doorway on the gravel path to the cemetery; the plump robin hopping in the barred shadows.

A TASTE OF JUG

BOOKIE EDWIN was my own cousin. So when he was drowned down in the surf at Ventnor, being exhausted after getting me when I had gone under twice, I felt it, more than the other fellows did. Gee! The rest of that vacation it seemed like it was cloudy and going to rain, even when the sun was shining brightly. And I used to lie in bed at night, and then I'd think of all the things Bookie had done for me, down to the last one. And lying there with my eyes shut I could see his stocky figure, and I could hear Bookie's husky voice again, the way he'd always butt into an argument: "Aw, you kids don't know nawthing!"

Honest, I used to get blue as navy blue, for he and I had planned to go to St. Joe's together. We wouldn't have been in the same class, for my cousin was Third High and I was just starting, but that wouldn't have mattered a whole lot.

Well, anyway, I went there to school in September, and you know how it is at a new place where you only know two or three boys out of five hundred. I guess I felt somewhat like Bookie must have up there before he got to know the others. But it was pleasant and new, and I forgot

that the other fellows in First High were just as greeny.

We had a man teacher, and that was something new, too. Bookie always used to say that men teachers were good enough for him, but he didn't want any thin, tall ones wished on him, for they are sure to be strict as the deuce. But my new teacher, he wasn't that kind—not be more than a hundred pounds, I guess; and I'm almost as tall as he is. And he was jolly, too. Once, in English class, I forgot and called him "Sister," and everybody laughed. Afterwards Wish Gosnell, who sits in front of me—and he was new to school, too—put up his hand and said seriously: "Please, sir, are you called Mister or Father, or which?" And our teacher said right away: "Aloysius, there is one sure, easy and safe way to tell. If we are young and handsome, call us Mister. So, boy, what's my title?" Wish grinned and said: "Father." And Mr. Albright, he laughed, too.

But that isn't the true way to tell the priests from the to-be-ers, for some of the Fathers aren't bad lookers.

There was old Father Maidment, for instance. Now he was as handsome as General Pershing's picture, and he was ever so much older, too.

I remember the first time I ever seen—no, saw him. Fats Kramer and I were in that long corridor outside the classrooms, and Fats was copying my Latin homework, for he had studied at the movies last night, and he knew Mister would jug him sure as anything if he didn't bring it in. (You know, "jug" is what the fellows call being

kept in after two-thirty p. m. in the afternoon when school lets out.)

So Fats was busy doing my Latin, when he just happened to look up, and he said low: "Good night! Here's old Father Over There."

I did a right-about quick, and there was a white-haired priest coming down the corridor. He was tall, and he walked as if he was a general in khaki, yet he didn't look so stern. He kind of looked like he would call you Johnnie till he knew your front name, and then he would call you that forever.

He was looking at us, half smiling-like, and yet I bet you he didn't see either of us. I don't know just how it was, but he seemed to be smiling at somebody in the wall back of us. Then he passed by; and Fats, he finished copying my theme.

Afterwards I said to Fats, "I say, what did you call that priest?" And Fats said, "Father Over There. Don't you know?" And I said, "No." And he said, "Well, you better, boy. That old gentleman has got S-T-period in front of his name, or I don't live in Lansdowne. Didn't you hear Father Maidment called 'Over There' before?" And I said "No," again. And Fats said, "Notice he didn't seem to see us, but some boys in the wall over there? That's why. He's always after you to pray for the boys in purgatory, and I think half the time he sees them, or they S. O. S. him, or something. Anyway, he knows something, he does. But believe me, there isn't any nicer Father in the whole college. You go to him Saturdays and see."

Saturday morning after recess, came Confession Hour, and I headed for the back of the Gesù. Just as Fats said, I found the pushingest crowd of kids outside Father Maidment's confessional.

Wish Gosnell, he got in first, and then I got in.

When Father shot the screen and I heard his "Well, my child?" I just somehow didn't feel a bit nervous. And at the end he said gently, "My boy, for your penance say three Hail Marys in aid of the boys in purgatory. Make a good Act now." And his old hand went up in the dim light and crossed and fell, as I bet it had done thousands and thousands of times. I came away feeling good, just like you do after a hot bath.

Well, I don't know how it was, but anyway Wish and I started going to Father Maidment regularly every Saturday. He just somehow seemed to be able to see around the corner, and what he'd say to you, you'd see that it hit the bull's eye every time. Wish said he felt the same way, too.

But all Father's urging about helping the boys out of purgatory failed to score on me till last All Souls' Day. I got the date down cold. It was November the second, and a Tuesday, and I had a date with Wish to go to the movies till the five-thirty, and then I had to meet Dad and Mother at Broad Street Station.

But of course old Wish got jugged for getting caught shooting a spitball in Algebra, and I was hanging around waiting for him to get out. There were about thirteen of us fellows in the yard—gee! I never saw the connection with that number before—and we were practicing kickoff. The ball

was the one Cousin Bookie had given me last birthday.

It was my kick, and I didn't mean to at all, but my toe sort of connected with that little pig-skin. And, oh, boy, it was a beaut! In a regular game it would have been good almost to the goal posts easily, but not in that peanut-sized yard we have.

That old egg headed high for the top floor of the Faculty Building, and I was saying, "Good night! Any of those panes will cost me three bucks if it costs a cent," when the little old ball seemed to turn in midair. At the time I thought a wind swept around the corner of the building, but later when what happened, I knew different. That football was stopped and directed right! And I'll bet you, too. The last I saw of it, it was making a perfect score through the open top of a window on the fourth floor.

Gee! I never knew how much I liked Bookie's football till I saw it disappear. So I told Boots Almond, who was a Gesù boy and knew the Fathers' Building, to go get it and I would let him have some kicks out of it. But Boots said he would get all he wanted if the Brother caught him up there where it was forbidden. And nobody else wanted to go, either. For the Fathers have signs placed on all entrances, which say "Cloister," and that's polite for "Keep Out, Especially Ladies and Boys."

But I wasn't going to lose anything Bookie had given me, without a struggle, so I said, "Aw, you fellows are a bunch of quitters. If Gosnell gets out of jug before I come back, you tell him to

hang around.''' And then I asked how to get up there.

So I went along that place the altar boys call Palm Beach. That's a long glassy corridor alongside the church, where the Brother, who has charge or something, keeps his palms and other green stuff to water them.

It was nice and damp and hot-housey in there, but lucky for me there was no one in the offing. For if there had been, I know where I'd have gone, and pretty quick, too! Believe me!

At the end there is a dark, crooked, crazy passage that seems to be changing its mind all the time. I know, 'cause I opened a door ahead and almost stepped out onto the green carpet that is in the sanctuary of the Gesù. There on the high altar was the Brother fixing candles, and you bet I shut that door softly and beat it through that dark zig-zag.

Then I came out into yellow light and I knew I was in the Faculty Building itself; and there to the left, just as Boots had told me, was one of those patent elevators. You know the kind. Not like in an office building, with a coon running it, but one of those trained ones that come whenever you press the button.

I did that, and next I knew the old elevator needed oiling or something, for it came buzzing down, making more noise than Bookie and I used to when the Phillies tied the score in the ninth. Well, I had to get up four floors; so when the lights showed the elevator, I opened the glass door, then the criss-cross one that folds up like a fan or something, and got in.

Boots Almond had put me wise to switching out the light so as nobody would see me passing the floors; so I punched the right buttons.

“Fourth floor, athletic goods, especially foot-balls,” I murmured to myself as the old bird stopped humming. Safety first! I crouched down and listened, but it was still as still. Then I quickly got out into the long white corridor.

I remembered it was the end room to the right I wanted, and by this time I was feeling like I wanted to get down to Broad Street Station and wait there for Mother. You know how it is. Believe me, I’d never make a good burglar.

But I crept down that No Boy’s Land like Elizabeth—she’s our cat—after a sparrow, and I didn’t make any more noise, either. All the doors were shut, and over each was a sign saying the name of the one who lived there. I walked quieter.

At the end room the door was open, and it was still as daylight in there. I looked in. There was a picture of Our Lord in the Temple with all those bearded Doctors, over the bed, and in front of that bed a tiny strip of carpet no bigger than on the end of a spring-board. And on the desk—it was one of those plain polished-top ones, the color of a tomcat that’s yellow—were a row of books and some papers under a little statue of Our Lord as a boy. Then there were a couple of chairs, and in one corner was one of those kneeling things. You know; they have a Frenchy kind of a name—“Pray Here” or something like that. On it was folded that purple strip the priest wears when you go to confession to him, and

above it was a cheap crucifix cross. I got a better one in my room that Aunt Polly gave me. That was about all the movables.

But gee! Neat! It wasn't a bit like my den at home, except after Nora cleans it up Wednesdays before I come in.

But I didn't see any trace of that football. Then I did what Caesar did in Roman history—we are having that now. I crossed the Rubrics and went into that room to give it a close-up.

There underneath the desk, where you put your feet, was old Bookie's ball, looking as comfortable as a big chocolate Easter egg in a doghouse. I hugged it and was making a quick getaway, when I heard somebody's step louder down the corridor.

Good night! I thought of under the bed, but that was less invisible than Billie Penn on top of City Hall Tower at two P. M. on a sunny afternoon. Then I noticed a door in the wall. I beat a bullet to that door.

Going in I caught a glimpse of black clothes hung on hooks, and directly behind me an enameled washstand with a small mirror hanging over it. I bet two bits, if you had looked in that looking-glass then, you could have seen my hair standing up straight as Elizabeth's when she is talking back to a strange dog—but not for the same reason.

Whoever owned those footsteps was in the room now. I was listening if he would talk to himself, so as I could know who it was. If it had been one like Father Maidment, whom I knew well, why, I'd have taken a chance and come out. Then

I kicked myself for not having rubbered up at the name on the door when I had the chance.

I heard him cough twice, like Wish does in class when he wants to get Mister's goat, and then he went over and shut the window. I felt more trapped, and for better security I snuggled in back of those hanging clothes and kept Bookie's football in the crook of my arm just like I was going down the field. And it was a mighty lucky thing I did, too—I mean get back of those clothes—for all at once that closet door opened suddenly.

Did I keep still? Oh, no! Bookie's football didn't make any more noise than I did. I bet my mug must have looked like a rat's does when you find him in the trap, and I felt as seasick then as I did once in a squall off The Shore when Bookie couldn't get the motor to work. But my motor was working like sixty and I had to shut my lips tight to keep from losing my old heart. Beat! Gee!

The Father took a wash-up and I could have been polite and handed him the soap and towels, but I didn't. Then that soap slipped, as I thought, out of his hand, and it hit the ankle of my tan shoes. But—good old soap—it caromed off the cushion to the other side.

Well, Father got the soap, and I heard him making funny noises in his throat. Honestly, it sounded like he was half laughing. Then he brushed his hair for a long time before the mirror and went out into the room, and I took a long breath, just like I do when I come up from a deep dive.

I figured that he would go out, and as soon as the coast was clear little old me'd follow in Father's footsteps. He did start for the door. Then I heard him stop, come nearer, and the next second I heard the click of the lock on the closet door.

Then it was awful still in the room. The only sound, me thinking.

S. A. G. means something else on an envelope, but it just spells what I did. And I didn't stop till I was squatted on the floor, the football in my lap.

At first I thought of yelling, but I soon canned that crazy idea when I remembered where I was, and then I thought some of the fellows would surely come, looking me up, and get me out. Boots and the other Gesù boys knew where I had gone, and if I didn't come back they'd come to know why.

But after what seemed like all night I gave that idea up. Still I kind of hoped that Wish Gosnell, my pal, would do something to get me out. But nothing doing.

Then I thought of Dad and Mother coming on the five-thirty, and I hadn't seen them since they went out to The Coast in September, and I wanted to see them the worst way.

Finally I got up and pushed that door. But it had more muscle than I have yet, and all my pushing did was to upset the soap dish. And then, groping after it in that ink, I poked my port lamp into a corner of the washstand, which must have reached out to get me; and it did, good. Believe me!

Then I sat down again, and I must have been dog-tired or something, for I don't remember much. And when I half woke up it seemed late as next week; and, take it from me, they must have turned the steam on or something in that closet.

I stuck out my hand and it touched what was soft and hard and went away. Scared? Oh, no! Then I remembered it must be Bookie's football, and I reached out with my foot and hooked it and I didn't feel so lonesome.

That pigskin got me thinking of Bookie, and it was about then that the light struck me. Gee! It blazed up so that I could almost see things in that dark closet. And I said out loud, "Say, Bookie, old man, we are in sort of the same canoe."

But then I thought how Cousin Bookie had died in August, and here it was sometime in November—it felt and sounded like the night before Christmas. And except for hearing his Funeral Mass and going to Communion at it, I had hardly done a single thing to release my cousin. And he was a good chum of mine, too.

I had forgotten him in purgatory like he never was, and I got afraid I was going to be forgotten here in this Calcutta hole just the same. Even my chum Wish Gosnell must have gone to the movies with another fellow. And I got lonelier and lonelier. Maybe part of that was because I hadn't had much lunch, for Wish and I were going to have eats at the Automatic before we went to the Chaplinia.

And I guess finally I got a line on how those

boys must feel there in the junior division of purgatory. They want to get out, and they think of the good times on high, and they think over the names of all their chums who might easily get them out by praying open the door, and they never do.

Then and there I made old Bookie a definite promise, and I said: "Help me, cousin, help!" The same words I had said in the waves that last day off Ventnor.

And I added, "Bookie, there is no camouflage about this. You get me out of this inkwell and I'll have a Mass said for you. And what's more, I will go to Communion for you twice each week this month, Sundays and Thursdays. I'll do this, Bookie, and more if you will please have that door opened."

Then I thought I'd try the old door once more, and I got up stiff and fingered my way and got braced against the washstand to start a drive.

I touched the door gently, as a starter—and it opened like it wasn't ever locked!

There was the same neat room, same as I had seen it a week ago, and the light was shining in awful bright. I blinked.

And then I sprinted. Down that corridor, down every third step. No humming elevator for me! Through that crooked passage, and I never stopped putting space between me and that detention camp till I was in Palm Beach.

There I put Bookie's football down and looked at my wrist watch. It was just four forty-five, but I didn't know whether it was today or to-

morrow. If I had asked my stomach it would have said next week sure.

But along came Mr. Albright and he said, "Why, what are you doing? Just out of jug?"

And I said, "I'll say so, Mister."

Then I asked him what day it was, and he said, "Why, this is Tuesday, and tomorrow will be Wednesday, I think, but I am not sure."

And I said "Thanks" and "Good-by." I thought "Good night! Have I been stuck there only two hours? Gee, I wonder how time must feel to Bookie."

Then I took the car and was just in time to meet Dad and Mother at the station. Mother said afterwards it was worth going away two months to get that kind of a welcome I gave them. That night at home I struck Dad for two dollars advance on my next allowance. He came across, and the next day I called for Father Maidment.

He came down to the parlor in a few minutes, and as soon as he looked at me he looked at my tan shoes. I thought he was going to say they needed the brush which was true, but he just half smiled, like he was placing them.

I told him at once I wanted Mass said twice for Cousin Bookie Edwin, and then I told him what I've been telling you, and he kept smiling that "Over There" smile of his. He listened, saying nothing till I had finished about the funny way the door came open. Then he said:

"Surely I'll say Mass tomorrow and Friday for Bookie. Would you care to serve and receive Holy Communion?"

And I said, "Father, you bet!"

Then he looked at my shoes again and he said something that made me sit down hard.

He said, smiling all the time:

"I thought I recognized those tans yesterday. That's why I threw a cake of soap at them, Victor. And when I came back later, rather remorsefully, lo, I found their owner dreaming peacefully, and I left my closet door unlocked."

Gee! If this youth but knew it was *his* room, he'd have picked up and handed back that soap politely. Then I might never have tasted till I got there how it feels to be interned somewhere in purgatory.

But my dead cousin Bookie and those like him can't say any more that I don't help them aloft. Believe me, I learned complete in one lesson.

THE SMALL ANGEL

IN THE cool shadows that the late afternoon slants upon the Road from Purgatory play the Small Angels. True, there are gayer playgrounds within the resplendent City. But, with the common consent of all Heaven, this space to the left of the towering golden arch, by which every released soul must pass, is reserved for those children whose mothers have yet to come.

There in the pleasant shades multitudes of these Bright Ones, whom no man can number, dart hither and thither in their gay games, while ever and anon one will stop short in the middle of a happy romp and gaze searchingly at a face in the passing crowd. There will either be the breath of a sigh and the Small Angel is back at play again, or there will be a moment of unbelieving recognition, then the glad cry, "Oh, my mother!" goes up, and right there, obstructing the whole Road from Purgatory, a little form will be folded in a tight embrace, and the watching Small Angels will resume their games, knowing that one of their companions will never care to play again in the shadows of the ramparts.

Among this splendid throng of Small Angels that laughed and ran just outside the sparkling

walls was little Francis. He had played there now for close on to twelve years, and that length of waiting seemed tremendously long. He could recall—he did not know how many—chums of his who had broken off their sports and led a mother under the great golden arch, and the longing to enjoy that deferred pleasure made him drop out of the present game and travel down the road a bit.

Seated there motionless above the wayside, he viewed the last stretch of the Road from Purgatory. As far as he could peer, down to the dim edge of the blue horizon, flowed an endless stream of souls in his direction. Soon, with chin cupped in chubby hand, he fell to scanning the faces and noting the last trace of Purgatory's anguish vanish as each new Blessed was transfixed by the first sight of the great gateway and the glimmering promise beyond.

Francis must have been there apart many moments, thrilled with the contagious joy of this contemplation; forgetful of the companions that chased and frolicked in the shadows; forgetful momentarily of the wish that had made him break away from them, when he became aware that he was no longer alone in his nook. Another and a larger Bright Spirit was at his side, and Francis, without looking up, knew who it was.

“Why are you not romping with the Small Angels, Francis?” asked the Guardian, eying the crumpled figure. “Too old to play with the Gay Ones?”

The nearest thing to a look of sadness came

over the Small Angel's countenance as he sat, wing to wing, alongside his mother's Guardian, and were it possible for a Small Angel to weep, the throng in the road might have been then and there shaken in all their preconceived notions of angelic ways; but before that unheard-of event had a chance to happen, the sympathetic Guardian had opened his gleaming wing and enfolded the nearly-lonely lad.

"I know, dearie. Waiting to meet her does seem long sometimes, doesn't it?"

From the white depths came no sound, but the Guardian felt soft celestial curls nodding against his side.

"Well, it isn't really so long—a little while more, maybe much shorter than you ever suspected, Bright One, and then—" the Guardian stooped low to whisper, "all eternity, Francie, all eternity, and never to be parted while God is God!"

The Small Angel sat erect at the thought and his blue eyes sparkled as only eyes accustomed to the Beatific Vision can, and in that look the Guardian drank ample recompense for his kindly words.

"Oh, Guardian! I know it will soon be for all eternity, but I forget sometimes and then I want 'all eternity' for her to start right away. Now!"

"What!" cried the angel of his mother, drawing away and pretending to be horrified. "You wish my charge to die! Most children, I always heard, wanted their mothers to live and—"

"And that's what I want my mother to do. I have so many places to show her and, oh, so many

things to tell her. Just think, Guardian, it's twelve long years since we've met, and that's a long, long while for a small chap."

"Chap!" corrected the Guardian playfully. "Is that the proper word for a Small Angel?"

"Well, then, for a small *angel*. It's a mighty long while."

The Small Angel gazed at the people in the road, then suddenly resumed:

"Why, I don't even know whether I resemble her or father! Which do I look like, Guardian?"

Francis stood up and, back to the crowded Road from Purgatory, faced the smiling Guardian. He remained erect and serious while the inspection was taking place. The Guardian's smile deepened as his glance rested on the tips of the bright sandals, slightly tarnished from a late game; then up the chubby figure, clothed in shimmering blue and white, and up to the glowing face, crowned with its golden sunshine. Innocence and wisdom shone forth, and the Guardian's thoughts leaped back to the Garden at Nazareth and the face of the Boy who had walked there.

"Which, Guardian?" cried Francis again, seeing his companion had grown wistfully abstracted.

"Which of them would you wish to resemble?"

"Now, that's not the question I asked you, Guardian." Then solemnly, "You know you should always answer one question before asking another."

The larger angel took his rebuke in silence, and waited for the Small Angel to speak again.

"I want to ask you something, Guardian. Did it ever, ever happen in Heaven that one of us,"

Francis pointed to the players in the pleasant shadows, whose shouts came faint as echoes from distant rocks, "that one of us was allowed to take the place of his mother's angel for a time—did that ever happen, do you know?"

"I've heard of cases," gravely replied the Guardian, "but they were very rare, and there was some very special reason for them. But, Small Angel, have you been thinking of relieving me?"

The Small Angel sat down and began very confidentially:

"Now, Guardian, you know that, after my own angel, I like you best of all angels, don't you?"

"I thought I heard a few moments ago," remarked the other softly, "that one question should always be answered before—"

"Don't you know that, Guardian?" went on Francis, laying his hand on the larger angel's knee, "And that you always did anything I ever asked? Now, Guardian, here's what I was thinking before you came. My mother's birthday, is to-morrow. You needn't look surprised, because I know that and lots more that you never suspect. Now, Guardian most dear, I want you to get me permission. I know just how to act and what to whisper—you've told me often enough what the duties of a Guardian Angel are—and you can take a rest all to-morrow. Won't you please do this for me, Guardian, and in return—oh, I'll do whatever you wish?"

The Guardian had been listening attentively to

the Small Angel's request, but his reply was most irrelevant.

"So a certain Small Angel, after 'twelve long years,' knows lots more than I even suspect. He knows, for instance, that I ceased to be an active Guardian last evening, when—"

"O Guardian, what did you do!"

It was a horrified Small Angel that started back.

"No; I wasn't guilty of any negligence. But I was just thinking that some small people don't suspect how little they really do know of what should interest them very much. So you're not contented with being a Small Angel, but you must aspire to the choir of Guardians and plot out schemes for displacing a faithful old Guardian from a position he has held for years and—"

"You know I don't mean that. Just for one day, her birthday. I'll take the best of care of her."

"And what reason could I bring before the Throne to have this rare favor granted? A Small Angel is dissatisfied with all his happiness?"

"No, no; that's not so and you know it, Guardian. But say a little boy wants to see and be near his mother for just one day, and He will understand and grant the permission."

"But suppose it wasn't necessary to ask that."

The Small Angel looked doubtfully at the larger angel.

"Suppose, now, I came to let you meet mother and see her for more than 'just one day.' "

"What! Guardian, did you get leave to take me back to earth with you?"

“I never said that. How some Small Angels jump at the most reckless conclusions! What I was going to remark before I was interrupted—” the Small Angel hung his head—“was that I had come to the outer playgrounds to invite Francis for a stroll,” and he nodded toward the green lands that lined the distant Road from Purgatory. “Being an ex-Guardian, of course, one has much leisure. Ready?”

“Oh, Guardian, what are you saying? I don’t understand your talk. If you’re not, then who is my mother’s Guardian Angel?” It was a much-worried Small Angel that got up.

The two dropped down from the ledge and over to the right of the road. On that side traveled very few: mostly Guardian Angels hurrying along to earth or Purgatory, and now and then a fair Saint on his way to visit a client. Naturally all the heavy traffic was on the left and streaming toward the arch.

They came to the first turn, which really is no turn at all, but just a jog in the road. Then they entered on a stretch of highway unfamiliar to the Small Angel. The rich greenery of graceful trees and the gay flowers, a tumult of tones that made the road, as it neared Paradise, the most beautiful spot outside the ramparts, had changed. Francis noticed now that the trees of the woods had given way to shrubs and stood whole distances apart, and the flowers grew scattered and sombre-hued.

It was a drear landscape that the two looked

upon, and it should have been, for they were nearing the confines.

Below the second turn, where the road bends sharply to the east, stands a mass of gray rock, and here the Guardian drew the Small Angel aside.

"You're to rest, Francis, while I go down the road awhile. Now can I be sure you won't return to the playgrounds without me?"

"Why, Guardian! Certainly," assured Francis.

"Quite sure you won't forget all about your promise to return with me, when we come back?" persisted the Guardian. "Well, then, we'll see!" And he was off.

The Small Angel seated himself, wondering why his mother's angel had seemed to doubt him. Then he fell again to watching the crowd that surged silently by. Several times he bobbed his curls to Guardians of his acquaintance who always smiled back, and once he waved his hand encouragingly to a boy of his own size, who looked rather bewildered. Then he sprang to attention, as a Saint and his escort of new Blessed drew near, for he recognized his patron, the mighty Xavier. The kindly-faced Saint returned the salute of the Small Angel and called across the wayside:

"All alone, namesake? Haven't you strayed far to-day?"

"I'm waiting for mother's Guardian, sir. He told me to." And the great Francis nodded knowingly, as he led his newly-released clients along.

Francis thought of the day, twelve years ago,

when the same gracious Saint Francis had given him, a freshly-arrived celestial baby, such a warm embrace, and had lifted him up to the waiting arms of Mother Mary that she might present him, and thinking thus on the kindness of his patron, the Small Angel looked across the road.

There was a gap in the passing crowd and in advance of the next group came two. Francis from his nook saw that they were deep in conversation, their faces hidden. Abreast of him they halted, and Francis started. One, the smiling one, was pointing directly at the astonished Small Angel, and the other looked up for the first time.

“Why! Guardian—” but Francis forgot to finish his sentence.

A trailing streak of blue and white flung itself into the outstretched arms, and the glad cry of eternal reunion, ‘O my mother,’ that is usually heard just outside of the golden arch, that afternoon went up from the bleak neighborhood of the second turn.

At once a tactful Guardian started home in advance, and he only stopped once, and that was to tell the star-eyed children, playing in the cool shadows of the ramparts not to expect Francis to join in their games again, for Francis’ mother had come.

UNDER THE ÆGIS

THE trees that in the green months made "The Bay" desirable, and "Mariner's Place" its shadiest lane, stood out bleak and black in the frosty air. A light fall of snow camouflaged the walks and shrubs and crunched sharply under the postman's feet. He bore the sack of Santa Claus, but his grin was the grin of old King Coal, as he turned in at the Shieldeds' gate.

Pearly-haired Mrs. Shielded, standing at the glassed veranda door, one hand lifting aside the flag with the three blue stars, was unconsciously impersonating a current magazine cover. Then she flagrantly violated all the "Nine Rules for the Prevention of Pneumonia" as she anxiously stepped out to meet the letter man.

With a "Merry Christmas, ma'am," he handed her five envelopes. One glance, and she instinctively clutched them to her bosom. Very distractedly she returned his greetings and started to retire. Then, recollecting, "Oh, Mr. Piper!" she turned and reached him a white envelope that had been stuck handy to the door. He rightly suspected it contained a Yankee scrap of paper, worth its face-value the world over. She cut his thanks, but, wise postman as he was, he took no offence, knowing the ways of mothers on the arrival of children's mail.

Within the home, Mr. Shielded hastened to obey the imperative summons to the sitting room.

“I thought the mocker was out and endangering your precious canaries again, Molly,” he began, but seeing what he saw in her hands, he promptly sat down to listen. Mrs. Shielded was fumbling over the inscriptions on the five envelopes, and she murmured:

“Ted, dear, isn’t the Babe good! At Midnight Mass I thought it was going to be a lonely day for the two of us, and, look! One from each of them—Jack, Theresa, Francie, Mary Magdalene (His Heart be honored for ever and ever!), and Teddy!” Then hungrily: “Oh! which shall I start with?”

“You might try the uppermost,” said Mr. Shielded dryly.

And eventually Mother Shielded did.

“The Chaplain came next day. He’s a Holy Cross chap. He’s handsome as he’s active, and before he shoved off, he had my slate cleaned up. Then he spread the Oils on my members and I got a feeling, Mama, that I didn’t mind a bit whether I rated a funeral or a furlough. I sort of felt like a vessel swinging at easy anchor at slack water. Then your prayers, plus Theresa’s, I bet, set the tide flowing east again.

“Last week I was discharged from hospital, and, believe me, the only disastrous effects this bird has contracted from double flu-pneumonia has been a first-class, acute——”

Mrs. Shielded looked up from the sheet to inquire:

“Ted, how do you spell ‘acute’? Francie has two ‘c’s’ in it here.”

“Well, he’s over-generous then, but go on, Molly, with the letter,” said her husband.

“—a first-class, accute, chronic appetite. The chow is great at Great Lakes, I’ll tell the world. But little old home cooking is what this gob craves. So, forget Hoover; bake up a stack of pies—mince, you know me, Ma!—save a whole and an half turkey, white and black meat, legs and gizzard, for I rate a furlough and I should go ashore at Grand Central at 2:34 on the afternoon of the twenty-fifth. That’ll put me in your arms before eight bells. So, hold Christmas dinner, for ‘I have a rendezvous with Eats’—and you two!”

Mrs. Shielded gave a little scream as the truth struck her.

“Why! Ted, Francie’ll be here this evening, and—”

“Don’t worry. There’s enough in the kitchen to feed eight,” said Mr. Shielded, but even he looked happier as he added: “Go on, Molly. What have the others to say?”

* * * * *

Mother Shielded turned to the last page of the creamy white stationery and continued reading:

“And I wish, darling Mother, and Father too, both of you, the same measure of joy that is mine this holy season. I’d be an ungrateful daughter not to acknowledge the debt I owe to you, dears. So when the Infant Jesus comes to His little spouse at Midnight Mass, I’m going to say:

“ ‘You Precious Child, please bless Father and Mother, once for the holy example they have ever given their little girl; bless ’em twice, for the love they have lavished on me; and, ah! bless ’em again and again, because of their generosity in letting me consecrate my days to Thy service.’ ”

“So, Merry Christmas, dearies, and a whole row of crosses; the evens for you, Mother, and the odds for Daddy—so like him!

“From Theresa, R.S.H.”

Mother Shielded got up and before “Daddy” realized what was happening, she had translated an odd number of those symbolic crosses into actualities.

Then she cut open the next envelope. Out came writing paper, that had “Knights of Columbus. War Activities. On Active Service.” printed in blue on the top of each sheet. The handwriting was large and hasty.

* * * * *

“Now that I’ve been dumping ‘ash cans’ for six months, I can qualify for the Street Cleaning Department. For, believe me, after passing unscathed through all the dangers of these zigzag waters; doing knight errant stuff for abused lady transports and tramps; and, in general, being Johnnie-on-the-spot when Fritzie broke surface, the perils of New York’s streets will seem picnicky alongside this late life.

“We’ve been ordered home, and this gunner’s mate will be ‘jolly glad’—as they say at our Plymouth base—to feast his optics on the Large Lady who holds the Torch over Gotham’s bay,

for that will mean, he's nearing the small lady who's holding this sheet. Whom do I mean? 'Ask Dad. He knows.' Won't I have some things to tell you! Oh, no!

"My buddies say there's some charm about me, I don't mean facially. Any old cracked mirror will tell that, but physically. I can't get sick or seasick; even the flu shied off from me! That time Fritz shelled us and got poor Bobbie Shaw, I was standing six feet away. Once, a depth bomb exploded too prematurely and almost blew the stern out of us, and I had been sent on a message to the bridge five minutes before! Our casualties were eleven. And then again, one peach of a night for murder, when I was on lookout forward, thirty-eight per cent of the open Atlantic came aboard, and I was washed away, and almost before I knew it, the next submarine chaser in the fleet picked me up. No wonder my buddies call me 'Jack o' Luck,' and swear I'll never rate any golden 'V' on my right sleeve!"

Mrs. Shielded laid down the pages to repeat: "O Heart of Jesus, how good Thou hast been to our Jack!" And the silent father nodded approval.

Some minutes later the mother was opening the fourth letter. That also had "Sailor's Mail" written in the upper right hand corner.

"Well, it's all over, Mother of mine, but those last days! oh boy! Didn't we put the fear of the Yanks into the Huns! There's a bird here in our gun crew, who once copped the mathematics prizes at Georgetown, and he's figured out

how many tons an hour we were contributing to the *tout ensemble*. I'll say that if the Jerries hadn't signed Foch's little old sixty-nine—or whatever number they were—articles, Nov. 11th, our pop guns would have had to be withdrawn to be rebored next day.

“Of course they dropped their visiting cards promiscuous-like, but they never touched Teddy. With ‘two down in the ninth,’ so to speak—that was on Nov. 10th—I was lucky enough to pull some hero stuff. We needed shells and there was a bit of a field had to be crossed. They sent two poor fellows and—well, I volunteered.

“One of our lynx-eyed Allies saw the whole show, and I got cited and now I've got to wear a bronze thing they call a *croix de guerre*.”

Mr. Theodore Shielded, Senior, straightened up in his chair, and instinctively his eye turned to a certain photograph. His hand went up and down in a snappy naval salute.

* * * * *

A cloud was passing over Mother Shielded's face as she carefully opened the last envelope. The fashionable sheets crinkled crisply and she caught a glimpse of the monogram in gold at the top of each page. She read the letter through in silence, her husband sitting patiently by. Then, without a word, she passed a section of the letter across to him and he read:

“I've caused you and Daddy heart anguish enough. I've been miserable, but, thank God, His love has conquered. Jim consented, and together we sought a priest here in Los Angeles, Father Lowndes. He knows the Gilbreths and the Henry

Hayeses quite well. He has fixed our marriage up. Agnes and Baby have been baptized. And Jim (I can hardly realize it!) Jim has placed himself in Father Lowndes's hands to be instructed. He will be received some time in January. . . . I've learnt money cannot replace peace of soul. If I had only been strong of heart, Jim would have come within the Fold long ago. You well named me. But like my namesake, I've cried: 'Rabboni!' and, O Mother, this Christmas will be the happiest I have known in five years.

“Pray always for

“Your Mary Magdalene.”

* * * * *

Mother Shielded had come around the table while her husband was reading, and when he had finished, she said gently:

“Ted, look, dear.”

And she pointed to the framed picture that hung on the wall above the boys' photographs.

Mr. Shielded remembered the night a few years ago, when all, by pen or proxy, had signed the picture.

Then ever so softly, the mother repeated the words that were printed below that Face and Pierced Hands and Thorn-girded Heart.

“We consecrate to Thee the trials and joys of our family, and we beseech Thee to pour out Thy best blessings on all its members, absent and present.”

There was more printed beneath the picture, but Mother Shielded could not go on. And it was doubtful whether Father Shielded could either.

Part II

IN XAVIER LANDS

THE SURE AND TRULY GATEWAY

ONCE when Father Francis of Xavier lived below the stars, the affairs of God carried him to Bassein. As he did step from the tall-sailed dhow onto the beach of Bassein, there came through the massive Sea Gate, the Captain General, swarthy and stately and bejeweled, and there came his staff, even more swarthy and stately and bejeweled than their Captain General, and the Portugese citizenry, and brown lakhs of the native Marathi folk.

They all stood about the beach to do honor to Father Francis, for all men knew that where the Great Father went, there came the favor of God.

The very magnificent Captain General with many a flourish and many a compliment began goldenly. He said in pretty words how he and the people of Bassein would eternally be grateful for this visit, and he acclaimed Father Francis, the Friend of God and Apostle, to his face.

This the lowly Father Francis thought exceed-

ingly cruel, and he listened like an embarrassed page to the Captain General's flowers of words.

Many other pretty things said the Captain General there in the sun on the sands of the beach, and all the while Father Francis kept his eyes lowly. But not so lowly as not to see a certain brown native lad, who edged as closely by as it were seemly a pagan lad should stand to a Saint.

He had earrings in his ears and an anklet of copper and a ring on his little big toe, but he was as to clothing fairly sky-clad. Moreover, he was such a lad, that standing erect, his shaven head would be on a level with Father Francis' heart, and Father Francis was never a tall man. Yet very erect and eager he stood there in the easting rays, and once when Father Francis did fumble, embarrassed, with his rude cross and drop it, out sprang this brown lad to restore it.

Afterward, he did catch Father Francis' azure eyes resting on him kindly—for Father Francis' eyes were always alert to notice a poor pagan lad—and he did make his salaams deeply and repeatedly. Nay, even so noticeably that the Captain General would have a gorgeous guard send him about his business forthwith, had not Father Francis signaled that the brown lad should be let be.

Then the Captain General came to an end to his welcoming words, wishing publicly that he might go to God from the arms of Father Francis. For it was the pious belief of the Portuguese of the broad East that to die in those arms was an assurance of salvation. And prettily he called the

arms of Father Francis, "The Sure and Truly Gateway to Paradise."

Afterward, the Captain General and his sparkling company did move, escorting Father Francis under the shadows of the towering Sea Gate—the silver bugles blew bravely—and up to the convent of the Fathers Augustinian, where it was cool-cloistered and seemly that Father Francis should stay out his visit to Bassein.

Now that certain brown lad did fair lead the bright company, e'en till the Brother Porter of the convent Augustinian, who did often accuse himself in the refectory of being over testy, most emphatically warned him away. And he went puzzled, for he had before this seen the Captain General and all Bassein do honor to lordly visitors, when they had landed beyond the Sea Gate.

Each of these Great Sahibs did wear silks of divers hue and much gold on their capes and gems that flashed back the sun. This Father Francis wore a long gown that was ancient and had been mended in places visible and his shoes were pitiful and his only ornament was that rude cross, caught in his girdle. Yet it seemed certain that the Captain General, and the Portuguese, both of gentle birth and base, and the Christians of the natives had been more anxious to heap honors on this Father Francis than on all the other high visitors of the past.

This puzzle teased the lad far into the evening and he did think over it deeply. As he fell asleep, he remembered pleasantly that the Great Father had looked at him kindly, when he did make salaams, and so he resolved—e'en as a boy will

—that though all the guards and Brother Porters in Bassein barred the way, he would find early occasion to stand near Father Francis again. And his dreams that night were pleasant.

Before the little green parrots of the palm tops began their daily warfare with the bold blue crows, this brown lad did leave behind his father's hut and the strung-up nets—for his father and his brothers caught fish—and did betake his shadow below the tall walls of Bassein.

A few fishing dhows with their dark triangular sails hoisted were already slowly putting out to sea; the tired guards paced carelessly their allotted beats high on the walls, but naught else moved. Even the stout gates, bristling with their iron spikes, that in red days would bar a battering elephant, were still closed and chained.

Then it was, this brown lad saw the low side gate, that he and his fellow fisher lads called jokingly "the Monkey Gate," saw it open and a Sahib come out onto the beach path. When the Sahib had come farther, beyond the great banian and the last tilted palm, the brown lad's heart did give a great leap and then beat most increasingly. For the one coming was he, whom all Bassein had gone forth to honor.

There was such a wholesome look on the face of Father Francis that fear fled the heart of this brown lad and he did stand bravely in the path's center and make salaams. And Father Francis returned the salutation most courteously and said:

"Did I not see this Master Salaams but yes-

terday evening, when a guard of gay plumage would have sent him forthwith?"

And the brown lad admitted with ready delight that the Padre Sahib made no mistake.

Then Father Francis did ask him his name and the names of his choice and did invite him to walk by his side.

So they walked, having the still Arabian Sea, many-colored in the early light, on their right. And it was of a joy for the brown lad to listen to Father Francis and the pleasant way he did speak of wonders.

Mostly he told the brown lad of the fair Kingdom of his King. And when Father Francis spoke thus, his eyes were brown fire and his voice was oil poured out. Ah! his words were as oil poured out on the hot heart of this pagan lad, and they did enkindle therein a quick desire. This he did put into words and say, half afraid yet eager that the answer might be so:

"Great Sahib, might such a one as I, sailing away, enter this Kingdom and see thy King? I do desire it!"

Then did the Father reply:

"Ah! little Sambaji, it was that such as you might enter into this Kingdom that I did come across these many leagues. For the King of this Kingdom I do serve most gladly, and for that service I do desire only His love and His grace."

Here Father Francis did stop and look down full-face at the pagan lad, Sambaji. And pity such as softens the good shepherd's eyes as he does follow the hard trail of a lost lamb, came first in Father Francis' countenance. But as he looked

upon the pagan lad, pity brightened into contentment—such peace as shines in the good shepherd's eyes when he knows the lost will be safe.

Then said Father Francis:

“Chhokra,”—for so Sahibs address native lads—“Chhokra, it is permitted me to see that my King in His kindness will grant your wish. Yea; ere the little green parrots rest again.”

And Father Francis' face was fatherly, as he did make the Sign lightly on the upturned forehead of the pagan lad.

“Now run back to thy nets, little son, for I would speak with my King here in the silence of the shore.”

So Sambaji, the brown lad, very gayly did take his dismissal from Father Francis. And the Saint paced slowly by the white breaking sea, meditating gratefully on this latest tender mercy that his King had let him vision.

But quickly came the ardent sun over the walls and the tall palms and Father Francis did retrace his steps back to the Sea Gate, now swung wide—very straight stood the guards as he did pass them—and back to the convent of the Fathers Augustinian.

Then came relief to the Brother Sacristan, who had laid out his best vestments for the Saint's Mass, and had sought him vainly in cloister and compound for the hour past.

All through the warmth of the day did Father Francis toil on his King's affairs. He did go early to choose the site for St. Paul's, the college he would found, pacing out the ample dimensions himself. But mostly he was in the convent, over-

much spoken by noble and merchant and soldier, and he did listen most Christlike, as each in turn poured out his sins and miseries.

Then the Saint would speak the words of guidance and pardon, and soldier and merchant and noble would arise comforted and strong.

When it was come evening again, but not dark, and the little green parrots were ceasing their shrill warfare and were hurrying overhead to their own palms, the Captain General did come, unattended, desirous of conversing with Father Francis about his soul's estate.

The Saint met him and said he had an urgent affair abroad, and invited the Captain General to walk there with him.

So out of the convent of the Fathers Augustinian went the two, Father Francis and the Captain General of Bassein. They passed the high, white palaces of the Portuguese—for Bassein was a goodly city, granting precedence only to Goa, the Golden—and all they met, lady and maid, guard and servant and white-frocked friar, did make way and bow low. They passed through the ample North Gate and by the palm-thatched bazaars, where every native, even the little jeweled children, did make salaams to the Great Sahibs.

And it was under the golden glow of a palm-roofed road, as they were coming close by the fishing village, that the Captain General in a break in the conversation did raise his eyes and see ahead a native lad, approaching.

As they drew near, the native lad did look expectant and then salaam deeply to Father

Francis. The Captain General did motion authoritatively to make room—for the jungle grew close on either side—and the lad did step backward obediently into thick bamboo shrub. At once, under his bare feet, a dark thing did rear and spread and flash forward.

The Captain General saw the brown lad's hand driven sharply against his slim body and the lad did utter the high cry of pain.

What had struck did lower its hood and pour away.

Then did Father Francis hasten his steps to the sinking lad and he did kneel and lay him gently against his own knee.

They did see with quick glance that the poison had entered full and was already coursing toward the brown lad's heart.

Father Francis did speak as one having knowledge and authority as he bade the Captain General go to the closest hut and bring him with haste the "chatti" of water that stood there. Though it were not seemly a Captain General of proud Bassein should do a servant's task, yet for Father Francis's sake, he did go quickly.

When he came, returning with the dripping earthen jar, he heard Father Francis saying:

"And does my Master Salaams still desire to go avisiting my King and the Fair Delights of His Kingdom?"

The brown lad did move his head affirmatively, for the cobra's venom had all but run to the heart and the tongue could not move willingly.

Father Francis did let the Captain General act the godfather.

Then as the Captain General of Bassein did kneel humbly by—for even the great bend in the presence of Reaper Death—Father Francis did take of the “chatti” and pour its contents savingly over the pagan brow.

Up and down and across fell the stream from the right hand of Xavier, and the Saint did say the words of life, giving the dying lad his own name.

“Now of a surety will Master Salaams—nay; Master Francis, enter before us, the Kingdom of our King,” said Father Francis sweetly, and he did lay the listless head in the hollow of his arm. Taking the rude cross from his waist and pressing it lightly to the lips, he did urge:

“Francis-chhokra, hold tight this His Standard.”

And he did speak such things to the stiffening lad as a father would say to a beloved son departing on a pleasant voyage.

The kneeling Captain General—mighty governor as he was in the Portuguese domains—did watch his new-given godson, lying there in the arms of Father Francis—that “Sure and Truly Gateway,” as he had called them but an evening before—and he did feel the twitch of envy. This, the least of his subjects, had won the most coveted death in all the East Indies.

Ere the light passed into the western waters and the little green parrots were again at rest, the brown lad slipped from the safe arms of Father Francis of Xavier, through the “Sure and Truly Gateway,” and sailing away, entered the Kingdom and made salaams to the King.

PRAYER

FATHER FRANCIS HURTER sat alone in his room. His Breviary was read, and he was reaching a withered hand to light his long-stemmed pipe, when he remembered his daily Beads; so gently, as though not to offend Old Friend Pipe, he put it aside and sought tremblingly in his habit pocket for another, older friend.

Giving his rosary an affectionate squeeze (it had been his in Chicago before the fire), he glanced reminiscently at the crimson and gray college calendar and saw it was a "free day," and his old brows puckered as he tried to recall, if he owed any rosaries. No promised intentions arose, and he was starting to offer them for his boy penitents. Father Hurter's confessional in the back of the vast Gesù was a thronged box, for in St. Joe circles it was generally known "Father Francis" could understand a "feller" and "was easy on penances."

Then he heard, down in the college yard, a common college tragedy in seven reels. The sharp crack of a bat meeting a ball "on the nose"; a shout of unadulterated glee; followed almost instantly by the musical note of one pane becom-

ing several; a solemn, almost sacred, silence; then a deep voice, "like Iser, rolling rapidly"; receding trebles in Thompson Street: and a real, four A. M. silence in the empty college yard.

It gave him his intention.

Blessing himself, he lifted to his lips, as his custom had been from the calm novitiate years at Frederick, the Worn Figure, and began his *Credo*. Finishing the three *Ave Marias*, he stopped, and glancing up at the kindly-faced Sistine Madonna that hung over his prie-dieu, whispered:

"Mother, this first decade, with all my heart, for some lad in deep trouble."

The lean leaves of the plantains, like great, green razor blades, sliced languidly at the warm breeze, coming occasionally from the waving rice paddies across the yellow Kwangho. In the scant, hot shade, that the plantains cast, like a flimsy gray veiling, across the white walls and the doorway of the farthest hut from Père's red-bricked residence, squatted a boy in blue pajamas, Buddha style. It was just as well his pitiful legs were bent crosswise, and a kindly plantain leaf shadowed his face, as he was not a whole boy, as healthy as boys go.

Five years ago, he had been a black-queued Mass-server at tumbled Sen Mon Yeu, and deep down in the clear well of his heart there had been bubbling desires, that some day he also might have pigtailed altar boys serving him. He had even timidly whispered these secrets to bent Père

Molitor, who had baptized him and his mother and even, he had heard tell, her mother.

Père had encouraged him and promised to send him to the Petit Seminaire at Ton Se Wei, when, in one of the narrow alley-streets of swarming Canton, *mar fong* had touched him.

Then had come the first, faint flush in his yellow cheek, and Père Molitor had broken down more than he did, when the old missionary had to take him to Shek Lung and leave him in the company of other boys who were paying the penalty of death on the instalment plan.

Thoughts of Ton Se Wei and what might have been were brimming his almond eyes, as he squatted there in the dust and the hot shade, a useless, rusting thing. Thoughts, that were followed by blacker, blacker thoughts, that led to worse than mere leprosy.

Then, like the sun out of the East, came a clean, new thought: if he bore this rotting patiently, it would be only a little while longer, and then he, Francis Lau, would be clean of skin forever, like Mother Mary and the fair saints of her Son.

Francis Lau smiled up beyond the green plantains, and there was something less awful in his part of a face.

* * * * *

Father Hurter was finishing his decade, and he stopped a moment:

“It’s a hot day. I’ll say this one, Mother, as well as I may, for a laddie in swimming, whom danger threatens.

* * * * *

Beneath the light blue velvet of the glorious

heavens the white breakers splintered against the jagged brown rocks, that stretched out and curved to enclose a natural swimming tank. Ashore, the dense cocoanut palms and occasional breadfruit, swayed in unison. Sometimes, so mightily bowed the grove that the frosty-whiskered little monkeys, like tiny jacks aloft in a gale, held on with every leathery paw, and the bold, black satin crows sailed up, cawing, cawing.

Around the side of the small Hanuman temple, where the smoky incense curled up to the stone monkey god and the tom-tom boomed eternally, ran a laughing crowd of brown-footed boys. Some flew queer-tailed kites, all made of bamboo leaves and limbs, and others carried cricket bats under their arms, but all dropped these and their gay-colored saron cloths, which lay like splatters of maroon and yellow and parrot-green paint on the shore rocks, and raced to throw their brown selves into the warm, buoyant waves of their swimming tank.

First of these seals splashed Francis Jayatileke. His eager overhand lunges quickly carried him beyond the ken of his Belgian Prefect and the natural shelter of the tank, till he tossed, a solitary cork, on the open blue of the Indian Ocean.

Riding a crest he could see the narrow outrigger canoes of the fisherfolk and, shoreward, Galle Light, and the crumbled edge of the old Dutch fort, a relic of the days when Holland was master of the length of Ceylon, and back of that grassy green wall, the white buildings of his St. Aloysius' College, that huddled, like folks in the

days of the Flood, high on the hill overlooking the city.

Then he would sag into a deep trench of water, so low that even the chalk needle of the Light was lost, and he feared the lacy coral would cut him, and he would struggle for breath, before another mighty slope lifted him skyward.

Suddenly an unexpected wave struck him across the eyes, like the open palm of an angry school-fellow, and he cried aloud with the smarting pain. Half blinded he turned on his back and kicked toward the entrance of the tank, and so he never saw the deadly black fin and the greenish white belly that passed within a fathom of him.

Once in the gentle swells, back of the shelter of the sea rocks, the stinging left his eyes, and he was overhauling a brown Sinhalese chum, who had dared to duck him last swim.

* * * * *

The second decade done, Father Hurter's glance rested on his tidied desk—Father Hurter's father had been a sailor, and there lay a gayly-worded postal from a "Philly" boy spending the day at Coney. The priest's thoughts ran:

"Sure, Mother, an' this sunny day there will be thousands there. I'll give this one that some boy comes back home whole."

Then he deliberately locked the memories of Surf Avenue and the lights of Luna out of his head, as he began the *Our Father*.

* * * * *

"The Devil Dip Racer" stuck its scaffolding and ovals of serial track recklessly into the sky, while it generously offered for "Ten cents, one

dime. Children, half price!" as the hoarse-throated barker proclaimed, with the monotony of a repeating phonograph record, enough dangerous "dips" and right-angle whirls to satisfy even the jaded nerves of a New York boy.

Now, Frank X. Murphy, with a much-punched Steeplechase badge hanging from his lapel, was that, and his available finances totaled just one Buffalo nickel beyond his subway fare. Then he had but his subway fare, while he clutched a cheaply-printed cardboard slip that bound "The Neptune Amusement Co." to provide one round trip on "The Devil Dip Racer."

Frank shot by the couple ahead of him on the platform and dropped into the vacant front seat of the coaster car, but the big Italian starter said:

"Beat it, you kidda, an' waita your turn."

And Frank got meekly out, while the couple got in.

The car ran down the short incline, the "dog" gripped the chain, and, violently jerked and as violently tilted backward, was carried to the highest point of the coaster.

Then, while Frank Murphy sat in the next car with his eyes on the "Watch Your Hat" sign and the more eloquent wrecks beneath, there came on high screams—and then a falling car.

* * * * *

Father Hurter looked at his rosary, and saw he was at the fourth decade.

"Mother," he said aloud, "the world's wide as your heart, and there must be many of your boys in peril. Now this for a special favorite—though,

I know, you'd shield such a one without my poor prayers."

* * * * *

Down the steep sides of the rocky *nullah* slipped Francis D'Souza, heedless of the record the blackish rocks left in his fresh white clothes. A prickly cactus swept off his pith helmet and it fell and leaped and disappeared into the mango tops, some hundreds of feet below, while Francis clung to his rifle and his life.

After chota hazri—tea and a bun—he had lain in the *machan* back of St. Mary's Barracks, a hunting-place of rocks and *jumblum* bushes, that commanded the only jungle road the gray apes could take to the great Ravine—while his "tuck friend" had stolen around to drive the shy *bandarlog* within range.

Waiting, he could see on the other cliff the low bungalows, the thatched huts, and the yellow-domed temples of Khandala village; below, the quivering lines of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and the black mouth of the last tunnel on the Ghats, still smoking from the passage of the Bombay Mail.

Then, as he lay listening for the Mail to whistle at the Reversing Station (he checked the strong temptation to shoot at the fluffy quails that hurried close by, but he swiftly killed the scorpion that crawled up his boot), suddenly his ear caught the welcome chattering, and there below him were the gray shapes of the apes.

They came bounding along their tree-top path, their tails high and curved, like a contented cat's,

and Francis could see the tiny *bachchas* clinging upside down to the breasts of their mothers.

He cocked his .22, carefully sighting at a sun-swept yard of the trail. He let the first ten lope by, till his intended bounded into the strong light. Then his finger tightened. The report echoed across the side ravine, and the sentinel kites on high rocked on expectant wings.

The apes scattered in all directions, and Francis rose to chase the one that lagged. Out of the *machan* and through the jungle, across the fierce heat of the open plateau, heedless of snake holes, he tore and saw his prey drop into a stony *nullah*. Down the narrow trail that the neighboring junglesfolk, the brown black Kathkaris, had worn, Francis had followed, till his "topee" had caught and dropped into the green depths of the Ravine. He had murmured "Hard lines!" clinging to his rifle and his life.

There his ape had disappeared completely, and all Francis could do was to halt and cool off before attempting the steep *nullah*, back to the surface of the earth.

Up he drew himself, till he could see the jungle on Rama's Bed and Pillow again, and there, where a mighty boulder almost blocked the *nullah*, a slender shoot of bamboo caught his scapular tape and broke it.

He stopped, with bare knees pressed against the rough steps of rock—almost a rocky ladder—to recover his medal, and as he did so, fifty feet above, a gray ape in a *karranda* bush let fall a half eaten berry and swung away.

It fell straight on the flat surface of the big

boulder, and fairly struck "the Spectacled One" that, disturbed by the noises below, had come out and was nervously spreading her hood, almost over the path. The big cobra hissed angrily and glided back into her hole.

Francis, reaching up a brown hand and clutching the very warm rocks, where she had coiled a moment ago, pulled himself onto the even top.

After another halt, he made the plateau, and there he met his white-habited Padre Sahib, who cried in mock alarm:

"Is this the model Prefect of the Junior Sodality? I don't think even a dozen *dhobis* could wash that suit white again. Next time you go after the *bandarlog*, baba, wear your khaki."

* * * * *

Father Hurter waited as he came to the last decade. Often he did that, waiting for his Guardian Angel to suggest an appropriate intention. Hardly thinking what he said, he heard himself speaking:

"And this decade for one of the weak lads, who goes before your Son within the hour. 'Show thyself a mother,' Mother."

And he continued aloud: "The fifth glorious mystery.—Our Lady is crowned Queen of Heaven. Our Father, Who art in Heaven—"

* * * * *

Out on the choppy Channel were hurrying terriers of destroyers, smoke belching furiously from their many funnels, and back of them, the low, bluish rim, over which came, when the wind blew strong from Flanders, faint, steady thunder. But here in the peace of the hedge-clipped lawn

were tea tables and roses and the laughing blue-eyed Cornwell children.

Mrs. Cornwell was preparing tea for an invited score of convalescents from The Hall, and her children, as becomes kiddies not yet tall enough "to do their bit," were eager helpers.

She cast a quick comprehensive glance over the linen and silver, and then remembering that these coming Tommies, though men, who had lived horrors over yonder, were yet boys in days, and would eat boyishly into the sweets, feared the embarrassment of Cana. So the hostess said something to her slim son in the khaki and puttees of the Boy Scouts, and he, saluting, raced away.

Francis started the motor of his bike, and bending double, like the dispatch rider he prayed to be, when the King's sergeant would take him, drew a cloud of dust toward the hamlet.

The tuck shop promised immediate reinforcements, and Francis was coming home, when his motor started to jump spark. He dismounted in the long shadows of the cemetery oaks. The trouble speedily discovered, he was mounting to chug-chug away, when, through the ivy-framed window of the chapel, he saw the rector seated at his confessional, his hand raised in the Act of Absolution.

Maybe then it was only the wind in the oaks that whispered to the boy "Return in peace," for it was very still there by the cemetery side, like waters at evening. The only sound, the light falling clods, as the old gravedigger was opening a new grave, near the green mounds where Francis' father and brothers lay, home from war. Again

the oaks rustled overhead and the clods fell faintly, and the boy, leaning on his bike, listened deep down in his heart.

He entered the cool, dim chapel, and found himself kneeling before the Lady altar, examining his conscience.

Then, a light-hearted boy again, he dispatch-ridered recklessly back to the tea, reaching there almost with the emergency sweets.

But they were never to be needed, for the bell in the belfry gave the alarm to the countryside, while, half a mile away, at the Coastguard Station, the first "Archie" roared, and the brave birds whirred up again from the aviation fields to defend the women and wounded and young.

The Cornwell kiddies looked up, searching for the evil gray points, and Francis said:

"Zeps, again, Mater."

Used to such, they rushed for glasses. Then Francis made out they were aeroplanes, maybe two score, and they might pass high over Hampton Hall.

On the lawn the children grouped about their mother, and with uptilted chins, wagered pennies, as the white cotton smoke of the shrapnel burst nearer and nearer the growing points.

Then, out of the pleasant sunshine onto that green lawn, bordered by the roses and the trim hedges, fell a horror.

Francis never saw the torn roses and the ragged hedges, for he lay, like his mother and sisters and baby brother, a hideous, damp, spreading thing.

* * * * *

“Amen,” said Father Francis Hurter, blessing himself and slipping his old rosary into his habit pocket.

Then the old priest reached for the Old Friend he had slighted before.

THE CARPENTER OF GOD

THE two girls chattered, as with nimble fingers they proceeded to decorate their particular "Foreign Mission" booth for the opening of the "Field Afar Bazaar."

Warned the blonde:

"You're taking big chances if you intend to stand on those boards, dearest."

Replied the brunette:

"I'll risk my one-eighty on anything old Joe Barnum made. For there's finish and eternity to his carpentry. All his workmanship, Mary, is like that Life Insurance Company which advertised in the last Church Bulletin—'As Enduring As Gibraltar.' "

And, grasping a couple of rolls of crêpe paper, plump Nellie Haas confidentially transferred her "one-eighty"—which was really a conservative estimate—from the chair to the table of the newly-made booth.

With the crimson strips she began to bind the slim uprights that supported the booth's gaudy canopy.

It was Mary Adelizzi who discovered the shortage.

"Oh! That crêpe is yards short! We'll never

be able to cover all those strips, and it must be nearly 5:30 already!"

"Then send Joe Barnum for more. He'll get it in a jiffy. Here, you tack this turkey red calico up and get it wrinkly, Mary. I want a Fortune Telling effect to this booth. That's Eastern, or something, and just the thing for the Foreign Missions."

Nellie returned to the floor of the Lyceum and called across the hall:

"Joe! Joe Barnum, you—ou! Come here this instant!"

At the distant half-constructed booth, the young carpenter obediently laid down his hammer and started across the Church Hall floor. His rough overalls hid a big frame, and a quiet smile lit his gray eyes as he listened to the two girls.

"And we just must have the booth finished by six, Joe," implored Nellie Haas.

"I see. Well, give me a sample of the color, Miss. Will two rolls surely be enough?—and I'll trot around to Murphy & Hamberger's and have the paper back in ten minutes. You young ladies go right ahead."

With a blush that became him, Joe Barnum disappeared through the doorway.

"Did you hear 'Miss' and 'young ladies'!" exploded Mary. "And you and I went through the parochial school with him!"

"Oh! Joe Barnum always thinks TNT and our sex have much in common," charged Nellie Haas. "But I prefer that girl-shy type to some other this year models of the male. Take Buddy

Burke, now. I could have slapped his face the other Sunday coming home from the seven."

"Joe should have been a priest," said Mary. "Wouldn't he have made a magnificent one! I always imagined—"

"Under those curly brown locks he may have had some such thoughts years ago, but, first, with his mother a widow and that Barnum brood to help raise, what opportunity had the poor boy? Then when the mother went to her rest, there were the youngsters to put through school. Father Dwight says he's one of the most capable carpenters in the city and he's getting good steady wages now."

"I suppose he has a neat bank account against the day that a new home will be started."

"Who! Joe Barnum! That boy never cared for money," asserted Nellie Haas. "You must think I haven't two perfectly good eyes. What doesn't go into the family funds, is quietly spent on some charities. Just you keep your eyes open tonight, dear, and you'll see Joe Barnum drift up to our 'Foreign Mission' booth and leave half a week's wages in our cash drawer. And he'll spend those dollars so unostentatiously that unless you're sharp, you'd think that noisy and noisome Buddy Burke, being shamed out of a quarter, was spending the greater sum."

"But everybody in the parish knows Joe is interested in the Foreign Missions. Isn't he one of the prime movers of this evening's Bazaar!"

"Hush, Mary. Here comes our St. Joseph now with the crêpe," cautioned Nellie.

The young carpenter handed over five crimson

rolls smilingly, and three minutes later he was back at his unfinished work on the "Philippine" booth in the far corner of the Lyceum.

* * * * *

When Joe Barnum, among the last of the Bazaar workers, left the Lyceum and walked home, he found an envelope in the letter box. It was addressed to him and he recognized the scrawly handwriting. Methodically, he put it into his pocket and sat down in the kitchen to his belated supper.

"If there's anything else you want, Joe, help yourself," said his sister Martha. "Harry Shaw will come for me in a few minutes.

"Don't forget! You spend most of your money at my 'Jamaica' booth," she admonished. "Better start with me. Those parish girls will be very persuasive tonight, so steel your heart, Joe dear, till I've practically cleaned out your pocket-book."

"Gee! Martha, I'd rather stand and deliver to you now, than run that fair gauntlet tonight."

"You'll do no such thing!" charged his sister. "And if you dare to duck the Bazaar and go to bed, I'll, I'll— Here's Harry now. 'Bye.'"

He heard Martha laughing gayly in the hallway. Then the front door slammed and Joe Barnum grinned.

He reached into his pocket to find the "makings." Rolling one, and striking a match, he sat back in leisure to enjoy his letter.

"At last I'm on Easy Boulevard, Joe, old scout," wrote his correspondent. "This Southern California is a little big hunk of Heaven and

there's money in the very air. I'm breathing that air in deep draughts—this is a pun, but you plodding carpenters will never see it. Well, I don't mind saying Life has smiled on me. With the best little wife and two of the finest kids in 'God's Country'. . . . Junior is as bright as Jackie Coogan and Sister will knock 'em dead about a decade hence. . . . Man, oh man, you're missing Life. . . . Nellie Haas has had her cap set for you for years. . . . This is a secret, but it's a safe bet I'm nominated for Congress this summer and when I come out top dog in the November elections, I'll be back in Washington with 'Honorable' before my Baptismal name. And, believe me, Joe, this baby is going higher. . . ."

There was more to this chatty letter from this old boyhood chum. Plans and anticipated pleasures of a long successful life.

Joe Barnum, sitting there in the silent plain kitchen of his home, tired after a day's toil and the extra work that the "Field Afar Bazaar" entailed, felt a twitch of jealousy. Here he was dangerously close to thirty-five. His life plans had always to be set aside. There had been the burden of the home that had fallen on his boyish shoulders. Yes; he might have let the others shift for themselves. They all were now. . . . Bill went out to Golden California . . . soon the Honorable William Berch, M. C. . . . money . . . best little wife . . . bright as Jackie Coogan.

Joe Barnum looked about the home. Just Martha and himself and soon Martha would be Mrs. Henry Shaw and then . . .

There was a sharp ring at the door bell and,

putting down his cigarette in a saucer, Joe got up to answer it. Very likely they needed a carpenter at the Bazaar in a hurry. Lucky, I left my tool chest there.

But a red-haired messenger boy stood on the steps. He grinned in friendly manner at the young carpenter.

“Joe, it’s for you yourself. No charges.” And he held out the book to be signed.

Joe Barnum took the telegram. Then he reached into his pocket.

“Thank you, Mr. Barnum. That’s just what I need for the ‘Field Afar Bazaar,’” said the messenger gratefully.

Joe went back to the kitchen and methodically gathered up the pages of Bill Berch’s panegyric on Life and carefully put them back into their envelope.

He took a table knife and ripped open the telegram. He read it through with a swift intake of his breath.

Then he reread it slowly: the brief tragic lines that had sped across the continent.

Joe Barnum knelt down there by the kitchen table and he prayed, “Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.” His hand slipped naturally into his pocket and he was saying a decade.

When he got to his feet, he picked up again the yellow sheet to read:

“William and Junior killed instantly today. Auto accident. Sister unhurt.

“Katherine Berch.”

The cigarette in the saucer sent up a final wreath of thin smoke. Then it puffed out, leaving a long gray roll of ashes.

Very quietly, Joe Barnum went up to his room and dressed for the Bazaar. His thoughts kept traveling back to his chum. . . . Poor old Bill! . . . The last thought in his head!

Finally, when he stood at the front door, he turned back and picking up the phone, called the Rectory. Catching Father Dwight, the curate, he arranged to have a Requiem Mass said in the morning. Yes; he would be glad to serve it himself.

Then he went back to the silent kitchen and laying the sheets of the letter and the yellow telegram side by side, he began to think his thoughts in quietness.

A breeze from the kitchen window had scattered the long gray roll of ashes across the table.

There had come to Joseph Barnum the grace of one of those clarifying hours, when this uncertain world of probation and all its pleasing trifles, wealth and the shadow of an honored name, stood forth in all their tinsel reality. "I'm breathing that air in deep draughts" . . . "Honorable" . . . "this baby is going higher. . . . "Killed instantly."

* * * * *

It was a fortnight later and Father Dwight was counseling:

"It's too late for you to start Theological studies now, Joe, but feeling as you do, have you ever given the idea of becoming a brother in one of the Religious Orders a serious thought?"

“But, Father, would they consider a candidate of my age? You know how it was. I had to go to work after finishing the Grades. It was all Mother—God rest her!—could do to skimp and give me that much schooling.”

“So you became a carpenter?”

“Yes; Father, I know that trade inside out,” said Joe confidently, not boastfully. “But what help is that?”

“Only this, in the religious life there is need for men of all trades. Plumber and tailor, cook and bookkeeper, electrician: all may consecrate their trade to the service of the Lord. The preacher must eat and be clothed, and the confessor must have his Confessional and his chair and his table, and the Community must have the hundred and one articles that hammer and nails, plane and saw construct.

“In his hidden way, that first lay brother, the carpenter Joseph, had a desirable share in the mighty work of Redemption, didn’t he? He provided the necessities of life for the Mother and the Carpenter’s Son. Tradition tells us that for twenty odd years, while ‘Jesus increased in wisdom and age and grace,’ it was the humble and silent and efficient ‘lay brother’ of Nazareth who supported the Holy Family.

“So it is in the Religious Orders, the part of St. Joseph is taken by the brothers who toil in lowly and necessary occupations that their brethren, ‘the Other Christs’ may be freer for their ministry.”

Father Dwight broke off as he saw the gray-eyed Joseph Barnum watching him. Standing

up, the curate crossed his study to select a small volume from among his books.

Turning to a page that opened easily, he handed the small volume to Joseph and said:

“Read this out loud.”

Joseph complied:

“Here one lives more purely, falls more rarely, rises more promptly, proceeds more cautiously, reaps more graces, enjoys more peace, and possesses the pledge of a happy death, of a shorter Purgatory, and of a richer reward in Heaven.”

Joseph finished and Father Dwight explained:

“Those lines were written many centuries ago and they are as fresh and apt in our age as they were on the day St. Bernard penned them. They epitomize, that is, they sum up briefly, the life in religion of the three Vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. And they apply with equal force to the Religious, whether priest or brother.”

The curate held out his cigarette case.

“No thanks, Father,” said Joseph Barnum, “I haven’t cared to smoke one of those things for the past two weeks.”

The young carpenter stood up.

“I’ll think this talk over, but if I did decide on anything, what would I have to do?”

“Do?” questioned Father Dwight. “Why, drop into the Rectory of the nearest church, conducted by Religious, and ask to see one of the priests. Here in this city, for instance, is St. Aloysius’—”

* * * * *

The following extract is taken verbatim from

the issue of "The Pilgrim of Our Lady of Martyrs" for April, 1945:

"As we go to press a cable comes from our distant Philippine Mission, announcing the death of Brother Joseph Barnum, S. J. Brother Joseph's name infrequently appeared in this quarterly, but that does not signify he was not a valiant laborer in the Field Afar.

"Entering the Society of Jesus at the age of thirty-six, he made his novitiate, partly, at St. Andrew-on-Hudson and, partly, at Woodstock College. His religious brethren recall lovingly the memory of this humble lay brother, who, a carpenter by trade, consecrated his marked ability with tools to the greater glory of God.

"There was much of St. Joseph in this namesake of the Carpenter of Nazareth. The same modesty and quiet efficiency, the same ceaseless zeal to be about 'His Father's business.' He was a man of few words and many prayers.

"Shortly after pronouncing his First Vows, Superiors sent Brother Barnum, S. J., to the distant islands that were to be the scene of his apostolic labors.

"Only recently the Superior of the Philippine Mission in writing to Very Reverend Father Provincial, said: 'Brother Barnum has not been well for the past month and his health is a matter of deep concern to all the missionaries here. God alone knows the amount of work *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* our Brother Joseph has achieved during his eighteen years of consecrated toil here in The Islands. Brother has always appeared to me—and only the other day his Rector at The Ateneo

remarked the same—as the living exponent of our Vows: Poverty in his dress, Chastity in his countenance, and Holy Obedience in his ever ready hands. Before God, this zealous brother is one of our most valuable missionaries and his value increases with the years of his religious life. Please ask the earnest prayers of our brethren in ‘God’s Country’ that the Carpenter of Nazareth spare our good Brother Joseph to us. His death would be an irretrievable loss to this Mission.”

“ ‘The Carpenter of Nazareth,’ however, came and bade Brother Barnum lay aside his consecrated carpentry. We have as yet no details of his happy death, but in the words of St. Bernard—words Brother Joseph was fond of repeating—we feel confident that this Carpenter of God has already possessed ‘the pledge of a shorter Purgatory and of a richer reward in Heaven.’ R. I. P.”

MIRZA, THE MISCHIEVOUS

IN THOSE other days, when all men knew the city as Goa, the Golden, she had many merchants, and foremost of these was Don Visitatio de Noronha. His high galleons, deep laden with precious wares of silks and spices and smooth ivories, did part the waves, up and down and back and across the blue waterways of the fair pagan seas, like shuttles, and weave him a wealth of gold. But dearer to the bosom of Don Visitatio than the studded chests, that his successful ventures overflowed, was his small heir, Pascale de Noronha. And dearer to the boy than ought else, though he possessed many and precious properties in his father's great white villa, was Mirza, the Mischievous.

Now, as presently shall be unfolded, this Mirza's erring paw is the happy cause of this very tale, for it did bring a rare blessing on the boy.

For once, when holy Father Francis of Xavier had returned to Goa—it was during that last time he came back from ungrateful Malacca—he visited his most familiar friend, Don Visitatio de Noronha. Four days he honored the great white villa, that did command a placid view of palm tops and white breaking waves and the Arabian Sea's distant blue rim.

Pascale, like all folks of good will, would fain pass the hours where gentle Father Francis was.

For he did always experience deep delight in the company of the Saint. But it was not seemly that a boy of manners should speak when his elders spoke together, so the boy stood beside the chairs (Mirza busy with a berry, perched high on his shoulder), and listened with mouth agape.

For Father Francis was describing to his host his righteous departure from the beach of Malacca, when he loosened his sandals and shook off forever the dust of the city of that obstinate people. And he did tell them to their blanched faces—Father Francis spoke it sadly—that God would turn His Face away from Malacca and its evil from that day hence.

(Ye all know that to this latter age the once proud port is passed by and the city lies white and palsied in the sun, yet will not quite die—a city like unto the false fig tree that long ago the gentle Master Himself did curse.)

More spoke Father Francis there on the latticed veranda; but the boy, listening, did not hear him, for his head was full of the picture of the malediction Malacca lay under.

Then the sun being high, Don Visitatio did courteously arise. He laughingly remarked the baby monkey, now half asleep in the arms of Pascale, and said:

“Father Francis, I would sometimes you laid a curse on that imp, Mirza, for he does bring trouble beyond his size on my home.”

Said Father Francis, stroking the soft olive drab fur, as a tiny paw did reach and handle curiously the worn crucifix that was thrust in the Saint’s girdle:

“Nay, Visitatio. See, our Mirza does fondle lovingly Our Lord. A curse on such a monkey? Nay, Visitatio. Away be such sentiments, for my Pascale’s friend is my friend ever.”

Here Mirza did reach and pull the crucifix from Father Francis’ girdle and thrust it on Pascale. Horrified, the boy instantly restored it, chiding his overbold pet.

Then Father Francis was escorted to his own assigned room, for the hour of siesta had come and Don Visitatio and his son bowed courteously.

Later Pascale came softly to the door of the Father’s room, hoping he would be invited in for the dear privilege of a private talk. But he saw Father Francis at his rest.

Pascale did walk away without noise and dismiss Mirza, who swung in great swings off to a favorite mango.

Ah, it were well for the boy if he had kept the monkey close by him that warm afternoon! For, within the hour, Mirza, with a half-eaten kar-randa berry in his paw, came swinging back and dropped lightly from out of a nearby cocoanut palm onto the stone floor of the corridor. A brown servant lay sleeping in a doorway; else the long corridor was deserted.

Mirza loped into the room of his master, but he was not sleeping there. Then this mischievous one did explore other rooms on that corridor, seeking the boy, and finally—it were a rude thing to do—he came unannounced into the guest-room. In came that irreverent pet, into the very presence of the Saint. More, he did uninvited climb onto the low rope bed and sit up, peering with tiny

head cocked, into the brown bearded face, but it was not his master's. So he let himself down to the floor and chased a lizard up the wall and drank greedily from the vessel of water. Then he noticed something attractive, worn and shiny, that lay by the bedside. Mirza must trail across and pick it up and nose it and examine it curiously. And, finally, he did the deed that caused much confusion later in the great white villa of Don Visitatio de Noronha. Mirza loped away, out of the chamber of Father Francis and down the sharp shadowed corridor, by the supine servant, and in his leathery paw he clutched, as a very miser would a coin of gold, the crucifix that men well called miraculous.

It was cooler when the Saint awoke refreshed and he made search with much diligence under chair and bed and stand for his companion cross. He knew he had clasped it, as his custom was, drifting off into slumber. But, as was natural, the big room did not yield the missing article. And when his host came to his door, and saw Father Francis searching fruitlessly, he asked the cause thereof and Father Francis did tell him of his grievous loss.

Don Visitatio de Noronha's face darkened and he swore by the depth of the sea, the robber of his household, who had done that crime, would be punished forthwith.

Then came Pascale along the corridor, with Mirza on his shoulder, and Don Visitatio did call him sharply and question him. When the boy learned what had disappeared, he told shamefacedly of his tiptoe visit to the door of the room

and of his seeing the very crucifix in the clasped hand of Father Francis. As if to strengthen his young master's tale, the monkey Mirza chattered most significantly. Whereat Pascale de Noronha did say:

“Most holy Father, see, my brother, Mirza, does himself confirm my tale. For he was on my shoulder, when I did see you at your slumbers.”

And again Mirza chattered affirmatively and laid his tiny head against the boy's ear, as much as to say, “Assuredly, holy Father Francis, I confirm all that has been uttered by my good master.”

So whimsically did the baby act that Father Francis stretched out his gentle hand and invited Mirza to come. And at once (for Father Francis had a winning way that did attract both man and beast), the little Mirza leaped fearlessly and landed on the holy shoulder of Father Francis, where he did make himself secure by clasping with firm paw the Saint's ear. From that high perch he made faces comical at his laughing master and the grave Don. Even Father Francis did laugh heartily at the rogue.

But Don Visitatio de Noronha, though he smiled pleasantly, excused himself presently and called his butler. And he did order instant search to be made and all the house servants questioned. He felt it deeply that his guest, the holy Father Francis, should suffer any loss while under his roof. Great was the search and minute that commenced in the great white villa of de Noronha. Maid-servants were questioned till they burst into tears, and the brown men of the house and stables

were summoned, but each and all were earnest in their denial. Even the frightened red-turbaned gardeners, who were poor pagans and unknowing what a crucifix might be, did with many fluent words deny their guilt. Sudden darkness came, lighting the silver stars, and yet the crucifix of Father Francis, even a slender clue to its whereabouts, was missing. Father Francis himself said it was mysterious and, perhaps, the children angels had in their thoughtless play mislaid it, but that answer did not please the merchant, Don Visitatio de Noronha. He vowed piously—for the Saint sat beside him at the dinner-table and he was constrained to speak circumspect—that, come morning's light, he would himself interrogate each man-servant and each maid-servant who did idle in his great white villa. And he added—again constrainedly—that he would know and punish that culprit if it cost him half the cost of a laden galleon. He asked the Saint bluntly to lay a curse on this thief, who had disgraced his hospitality; as weighty a curse as Father Francis had laid on wicked Malacca. But Father Francis would not promise. Instead, he wished the missing article might make the culprit penitent. And the cause of all the excitement did sit as sedately on Pascale's shoulder and accept berries from the table and bury his milky teeth-points into choice bits of cocoanut meat as though his conscience were not as black as his paws.

It was after bed-time, when Pascale de Noronha made a horrifying discovery. He had retired to his own room off the corridor, but three doors away from the room of the villa's guest.

Turning over to sleep he felt something soft and wet under his pillow and then his hand touched something hard. Sleep deserted Pascale and he did spring up and bring a flickering light and examine. There lay a half-eaten karranda berry, staining darkly the sheet, and beside it lay the holy crucifix of Father Francis! At that moment, out of the night Mirza came trailing his broken chain. And somehow, Pascale knew the culprit.

“Oh! Mirza, thou wicked, wicked one! To steal from the good Father Francis! Thou art indeed a prince”—such does Mirza mean—“but a prince of darkness, and thou art not any longer my brother. No wonder you fear the black loneliness of the compound, with such a conscience! Prince—of Darkness!”

Mirza did seem to sense his master's displeasure, for he crouched, laying his head on his paws, and even his tail did exhibit the symptoms of penitence. Then it was that Pascale de Noronha's heart softened, when he would it would harden, for he loved first this Mirza, “the mischievous one,” and he remembered Don Visitation's great wrath and he feared exceedingly when his father would discover the truth and the true culprit. So he scolded his pet decreasingly, but he resolved in his heart to hide the crucifix of Father Francis and not make discovery. With this resolve hot in his breast he did take the cross and carry it out into the night to a secret place that he knew in the branches of a great banian. And there he lay it hidden. Then he returned

softly as the sea's breeze, to his high room, and took Mirza with him, saying half justifyingly:

"Mirza, I do not trust thee, and lest thou steal Master Father Francis himself, I must needs keep thee here in bed with me."

So Mirza curled up in a furry ball, did sleep contented, but Pascale's sleep was troubled, for well he knew that hiding the culprit's guilt was not his road to peace of conscience. Yet he loved Mirza, the Mischievous.

When morning had brightened, greater was the search made, till the whole household was troubled exceedingly; save only the Father himself, who went early into Goa on God's affairs. Don Visitatio alternately offered rewards of silver and threatened punishments that made Pascale, hearing his father's wrath, tremble. The luckless servant, who had taken his siesta yesterday in the corridor was denounced to Don Visitatio and ordered to be whipped. Still Pascale stood firm in his evil design to shield the thief, holding the monkey dearer now that he was causing him pain.

At high noon something serious happened, for Mirza, as though a curse had come home, was stricken with sudden, mysterious sickness. He did crawl into the arms of Pascale and look up piteously and almost seem to tell the boy to speak out his guilt, ere he did pass to his ancestors.

Worse grew Mirza as the day went down and with the return of Father Francis he was nigh his passage. Very terrified grew Pascale as he saw the pains of his pet, for he began to fear this was, indeed, a curse working and he, an accom-

plice, would be included in it. Vividly he recalled what his father and his friends said openly of Malacca; yea, what he himself had heard from the lips of Father Francis but yesterday evening.

So with beating heart he did take the weak frame of Mirza and going, come to the guest-room. When Father Francis bade him come in, Pascale entered with shamed mien and falling on his knees held out the culprit supplicantly, saying with torrents of words:

“Most merciful Father Francis, see, here is the thief and here am I, his partner, who did wickedly shield him. See, he suffers for his black fault, Father Francis! Oh, take away your curse and I will this minute restore your cross.”

“What foolish words say you, my child?” asked the Saint; for he did not comprehend these tumbled words, seeing but a tearful boy and a very limp monkey. Then Pascale did explain in fuller details and the Saint laughed pleasantly, his azure eyes gleaming denial.

“You foolish little one, to think for a moment that I would lay a curse on one of God’s silent creatures, or on the son of my most familiar friend, Don Visitatio! I’ll say our Master Mirza hath but eaten overmuch of mangoes and ’tis Mother Nature who hath laid this, her curse, on him. Come, let me take him, while you go and bring back my truant cross.”

And he did reach and take the sufferer in his kind hands, saying:

“So this little pagan did enter and carry off my Christian crucifix while I did sleep!”

Then the boy went in haste to the secret place

in the compound and came running back. At once Pascale's fears and troubles faded, like the end of day, as he saw the mite already grown lively in the hands of Father Francis and again the wizened Mirza, the Mischievous, of yesterday and this morning. Then Father Francis said:

"Pascale—baba, take thy penitent thief and tell him, for you speak his language, perhaps, better than I do, tell him that next time he would remove any of my property, it must be a bit of yellow mango or other choice fruit, not this dear image of our Master."

Pascale de Noronha would ask his own pardon for his deceit, but Father Francis did wave him silent, as Don Visitatio stood in the doorway. Father Francis showed him gladly his crucifix and said it had been returned most satisfactorily and added dryly that the culprit had already paid overmuch his punishment. Then Father Francis made mention of Pascale's fear and beckoning the lad to his side, said:

"Visitatio, thy little son did foolishly think I would call down the Master's great displeasure on his head for this baby monkey's whim. Nay: never would I do thus. But what I will do, is this."

He took the restored crucifix and placed it in the boy's hand.

"Pascale, Mirza did give you this once, but now I give it to you."

Father Francis laid his gentle hand on Pascale's head, as he continued gravely:

"Visitatio, my true friend, may you live to see the Master bless you exceedingly in this favored

child. May the Master grant him at the end of his days that grace I do most desire for myself! Amen.”

Father Francis turned and looked hungrily into the East, where below far horizons lay the islands of pagan Japan. His eyes were happy, not sad, as he turned back and he soon commenced teasing the willing Mirza and changed the conversation into lighter veins.

* * * * *

Two scores of years later, when Mirza was a memory, Don Visatio de Noronha, grown bent and gray, did recall those wondrous words of Father Francis, as he received the tidings and the charred remains of that twice holy crucifix. For Mirza's master was that Blessed Father Pascale de Noronha, who in the far kingdom of Saxuma, among his Christian converts, did glorify God exceedingly, winning the grace Father Francis of Xavier did most desire, by the slow flame of a Japanese martyrdom.

THE COBRA'S HOOD

THE *President Lincoln's* knots were numbered. The captive dragon, gliding through the still glare that marked her a brilliant target, was bearing a handful of her conquerors homeward.

Aloft twin plumes of smoke made puny efforts to blot out God's skywork, and the rigid snakes of the wireless swayed through worlds of distant diamonds and back again. Something of this infinity of space and the anxious night and the ominous waste of waters directly ahead of the transport cast a reflexive silence over the four casuals. Smoking was a thing tabooed and conversation lagged dismally.

An engine-room exhaust, far below the bright rails, began to hiss intermittently, as though it were a serpent angered by a sudden awakening. "Hissing like a monster snake," remarked an officer.

"India is a paradise for such brutes," replied the lone civilian of the group.

Again the exhaust hissed menacingly.

"They're demons in scales. I'll say they are!"

"They are demons in scales," repeated the quiet voice. "And the master demons in Hindustan are the sacred cobras."

"That's a cheerful record you're putting on in these evil waters; but shoot," and the officer humped his lifebelt so that he could lie back more comfortably.

“You know, of course, these creeping deaths are sacred to the memory of Shiva, a big boss god on that coral strand. And millions believe there’s a curse comes home to roost on whoever would kill a temple cobra. This would be superstitious in U. S. A. It is one hundred per cent. superstition, but India”—there was a little pause—“is India.

“If any of you gentlemen have ever wandered as far East as Bombay you must have heard of Khandala. It’s the city’s hill station.

“Last May there I had dinner at the bungalow of a Parsi chap, whom I had met in Bombay, and, our cigars smoked, little Phil Wheeler came by appointment to escort me back to St. Mary’s School, where I was stopping.

“My small guide was a slim, erect Anglo-Indian, not half bad-looking, though in daytime his face was disfigured with the pocks of a common disease. He was bareheaded and bare-kneed, and in the khaki shorts and shirt of his school-cadet’s uniform he might have passed for an Asian boy scout. He owned an infectious smile and the saddest eyes I have ever seen in dog or man—great dark wells in whose depths forever lurked uneasy shadows.

“I was a guest Sahib at his school and a decided novelty from the land of cowboys and red Indians, so his questions flowed like water over a falls.

“Finally we halted at a wild spot where the lonely brilliant hill road is really a gutter on the roof of the world. Here is a low loose stone guardwall, and below us, in the mighty ravine,

the earth lay like land on the moon. It certainly was what my companion called 'a healthy fall, sir,' to the black tops of the tall jungle far below, and the silent torrent down there might have been a broken-backed reptile of quicksilver twisting out its existence. Across this Asian Grand Canyon it was gleaming daylight on the abruptly ended plateau, that looked as unattainable to us as Abraham's Bosom did to thirsty Dives. We halted a bit here, sitting with our backs to the abyss, and the silence of the great stars stilled our tongues. Also the remainder of a tin of chocolates helped.

"Down the road a scattering of yellow gleams showed the thatched huts of native Khandala, and back of the village, as swiftly as the ravine fell, rose a corrugated coal-black range that terminated before us in a peculiarly shaped promontory. This massive prow of rock, towering silently up almost to the Southern Cross, is called Duke's Nose. It has been so christened by the last conquering power from its resemblance to the beak of Wellington, but from our chance angle of vision its native name down innumerable centuries better fitted it. For, ominously dark against the blue and silver of night, this peak was Nag Phani—the cobra with spread hood, rearing at the instant of its lightning lurch. And that apt designation made me drop into the vernacular.

" 'Nag Phani'! I exclaimed involuntarily.

"Phil, swinging his legs at my side, stopped sounding the tin of chocolates to look up at me, and smiled shyly:

“ ‘Sahib, how did you know my nickname?’

“I naturally registered my ignorance of that bit of school knowledge. Then he explained.

“ ‘Please, sir, the boys call me that, for I don’t like snakes, sir.’ There was no mistaking the dislike in his tone. ‘And, and another reason.’ He said this bashfully.

“ ‘Nag Phani! The Cobra’s Hood! Why that name, baba?’

“He looked at me with those great black eyes that seemed forever to gaze on tragedy. Then impetuously he hopped off the wall, faced me, and opened his shirt wide.

“On the bare throat, covering the jugular, I saw a darker marking. He shifted so that the strong light fell directly on the flesh and there was a sullen reddish birthmark.”

The civilian pointed across the deck and continued:

“It had somewhat the resemblance to the shadow that ventilator is casting on Number Four boat there behind the major’s chair.”

The three officers looked to where the lifeboat hung on davits swung out, and then quickly turned their attention back to the speaker.

“It was about that shape, and the lad said: ‘It’s thirteen years old, sir. As old as Philip Wheeler. It’s my nag phani.’ ”

“And in the white light the dark mark was the evil shadow of a cobra’s head, erect, hooded, and menacing.

“ ‘That’s why I do not like them, though I am no snake funk, sir.’ He added apologetically: ‘I

can't help it. My father—something happened to my mother before I came and——' ”

“He stopped abruptly and dug the toe of his boot into the road.

“ ‘This is why the boys call me Nag Phani, sir.’ ”

“I noticed he touched his birthmark with an evident effort.

“ ‘They tease me, sir, and say the cobra will strike me yet. He has his mark on me, sir.’

“I felt a chill stealing over me, not necessarily from the loneliness of the white grandeur that loomed and yawned about us. And it didn't warm me when the boy cried out: ‘What's that, sir? Did you hear it?’

“I had. It was an evil rustling in the black undergrowth beyond the low stone guard wall on which I had been seated.

“I said, ‘Come on.’

“It was a welcome relief to meet soon after a native bullock cart, coming from Khandala, that passed us with a jingle of bells and the salaam of a turbaned head.

“It was a shadowy stretch ahead, where the live jungle grew close up either side the dim road, and it didn't decrease my heartbeats any when Phil volunteered to tell me of a certain holy cobra that lived in the wall of the school dormitory and was fed on warm milk by the pious pagans who made the boys' beds. That is, it lived there until one night the American prefect, patrolling that sleeping dormitory, happened to discover it.

“This anecdote, typical of East and West, hastened us toward Khandala. Here at the edge of

the village we came out into a road I could examine again—thank Heavens!—and struck the tank. This, a mirror for stars and leaning palms, we skirted, till we came abreast of a little yellow-domed temple of Shiva. Its sculptured cobras protruded uncannily in that blaze of still light.

“The boy was on my left swinging his stick at an imaginary hockey ball and talking a blue streak. Then as we approached the shadow of a palm, which lay a black bar across the snowy road, I thought I saw something wriggling almost under our feet. I grabbed the boy and leaped back. And that something wriggled endlessly out of the palm’s shadow and into the moonlight toward Shiva’s temple.

“It was a long, thick snake, whose back had recently been broken by a native cart. Phil, more experienced than I, knew its helplessness to rear and strike. Like a tiger on its wounded prey he sprang forward with his flashing hockey stick.

“‘See, it’s a blooming cobra, sir!’ he whispered, as the yellowish belly lay upward.

“‘Are you sure it’s quite dead, Phil?’ I warned, in what I tried to make my ordinary tone of voice.

“‘Terror started to the boy’s eyes and he moved silently into the middle of the moonlight. ‘Please, sir, don’t speak so loud,’ he begged in a guilty whisper, and looked fearsomely around at the listening shadows of temple and tank.

“‘I must confess I looked my immediate black and white neighborhood over thoroughly.

“‘Why, Phil?’ I asked, for the late anecdote had been told in a shrill boyish treble.

“He turned those saddest of eyes on me and whispered so earnestly:

“ ‘The mate, sir. You must not speak or he will recognize your voice and follow you into the barracks, sir.’

“Nervously I laughed aloud at this bit of native wisdom.

“The skin wasn’t completely ruined and I decided to see by daylight if it could be saved. Phil sagely advised:

“ ‘Leave it here by the tank, sir, and let the mate find it.’

“Very reluctantly the boy lent me his hockey stick. Again he warned me:

“ ‘You had better not, Sahib. You had better not, unless you kill the mate.’

“But, fool that I was, I wanted a cobra skin.

“We entered the silent village and, before we came to the lights of the bazaar, turned down the blind lane that led to St. Mary’s gate. Here we ran into a milky way of fireflies that with myriad flash rose about our heads. And Phil said earnestly:

“ ‘See, Sahib, they would warn you, too!’

“But it was pitch dark at the end of the lane and I didn’t see.

“Phil accompanied me to my room off the boys’ dormitory, where I dropped the beast’s body by the door, and restored the hockey stick to its relieved owner.

“The Yankee missionary at whose invitation I had come up to Khandala had the prefect’s room next door, and I sought his company. I needed, I thought, a smoke and a talk.

"I found Father Harry in his long white habit watching his charges at noisy bedtime games in the compound.

" 'Oh, Nag Phani is a queer orphan.' He said at the end of my evening's experiences. 'He was leading a Kim's life, when one of our Fathers in Poona met him in the native city. Sometimes I fancy he thinks in Hindustani yet. He's got the eyes of a young Hamlet, hasn't he? And that most uncanny birthmark! It gives me the creeps whenever I see that kid in swimming.

" 'But it's bedtime for these babas.' And he blew his whistle.

"I went back to my room and washed up in the cement bathroom I shared with Father Harry. This bathroom was a crude arrangement, according to our American standards. Just a couple of tubs of cold water. When finished, you overturned the tub and the water flowed away into the jungle through a sluice in the wall.

"Coming back to my room I heard outside in the dormitory the evening prayers in common, little Philip Wheeler's shrill voice leading and the sleepy mumble of the responses. Then there came a shriek and much laughter. I knew some dormitory trick had been pulled off. I heard Father Harry and excited whispers and the usual Sabbath calm again.

"When the lamps had been put out and only the night lights were gleaming at either end of the great barnlike structure, Father Harry came into my room for a good-night smoke, and he brought the body of my cobra and dumped it in a far corner.

“ ‘Say, some of those imps borrowed this pet of yours and coiled it by young Wheeler’s cot. I’ll tend to them by the dawn’s early light. You must have heard Nag Phani discovering it. It’s a cruel trick to frighten him so, for he’s nervous enough. He’ll ride his nightmare again, I fear. Last Thursday I found him wandering in the outer gallery and he never woke when I led him back to his cot.’

“ ‘Father found a match and continued: ‘He has a queer history, like so many of his blood in India. There’s a yarn that his father shot a sacred cobra crawling in his compound, and next morning at breakfast another beast, like our friend sleeping in the corner, was discovered by Mrs. Wheeler. Phil was born that day, but he’ll carry that remembrance of his mother’s last breakfast, on his throat till he goes west.

“ ‘Nag Phani’s very wise in unexpected ways. Get him talking on native life some time and you listen. He’s a good little kid, though. You’ll see him up at the altar rails as regular as morning.

“ ‘I’m going over to the chapel for a visit, and you may be the substitute Beast to watch my Sleeping Beauties. ‘Night.’

“ ‘I answered some letters and then, as acting prefect, I decided to use my newly acquired powers. I slipped off my bath slippers and, barefooted, stepped onto the cool cement. It was vast and shadowy in the dormitory. Three night lights cast three cones of yellow over parts of cots and boys sleeping in the fifty and seven positions they fancy. One of the lamps was smoking and I prowled down to trim it properly. Turning

back, I saw my thirteen-year-old baba, a pink-pajamaed little figure, stretched out in the slumber of the just. Even in sleep that dark marking marred Phil's throat, and it seemed to my imagination to sway as the shadow of something alive and evil when the night light swung gently overhead. Yet Nag Phani looked childish and graceful, and I thought of Father Harry's remark, 'He was leading a Kim's life when one of our Fathers found him living in the native city.' It made me see this missionary game from a better angle.

"Phil began to toss uneasily, and then he moaned in a funny, troubled way. I saw his hand go up to his marked throat. It was too suggestive, so I came away.

"I received another start entering my room and suddenly seeing that blasted corpse which Father Harry had flung so lifelike in the corner. I had half a mind to pitch it into the bathroom. I wish to heaven that I had!"

Here the quiet voice of the young civilian broke and the major said impatiently:

"Go on. Go on, sir."

It was noticeably growing lighter in the dark deck section where the casualties lay. Said the captain, looking aloft:

"Old Abe's shifting her course. She must be swinging ninety degrees. Look where the moon is!"

The big *President Lincoln* continued to swing until her new course brought the strong light full upon the young face and the white hair of the civilian.

"We're off on a new slant, and I hope it's a

lucky one. But say, sir," demanded the major, "put on that Eastern record and finish it."

"Yes," resumed the civilian, lifting an end of his life preserver and shifting so as to get the moonlight out of his eyes. "That last start drove sleep away, and as it was hot as the Subway in August—you know what tropical nights are—I opened the bathroom and the dormitory doors to start an imaginary draft and settled myself in the depths of my steamer chair.

"A blessed New York paper had come in the last mail and naturally I turned to the usual ante-season dope sheet. You fellows know the spring-time line they hand the fans, and I was deep in that stuff.

"It was, maybe, nearer midnight than eleven and still as the *Lusitania's* dining saloon at this very moment, when I heard yells from the boys' dormitory. There was no mistake. Those were yells of mortal terror.

"I sat up, and as I did there was a sound like the rustling of dead leaves back of my chair. I turned away from the light, and there, moving along the white wall of my room was a long, bulging shadow. It kept coming on, and next second, within striking distance of my bare feet, swaying like a sunflower in the breeze, was the largest cobra I have ever seen.

He reared a yard of sickish yellow underbody. I could have petted him on his spectacled head. But in those hard cold eyes there was something that froze me, body and limb. If I ever meet Shiva or Lucifer on the street I'll recognize them. The

thought came at first that this was my dead cobra, but she lay beyond this live one.

“That yell filled the dormitory again. There was a patter, patter of scared feet, and pink-pajamaed Phil Wheeler was framed in my doorway. His eyes were open in dread. He murmured thickly, as those who talk in their sleep do: ‘The cobra is after me, sir.’ He did not stop, but fled into the room toward me.

“God helped me in that moment, for I made a spring and the boy fell over my arm. His exposed neck hung down, and then that demon in scales, as though he knew and had glided into position, lurched forward.

“My rush carried us into the half-awake dormitory, and I managed to drop Phil on an empty cot.

“Father Harry and frightened boys and lights came.

“Those fangs had landed on the birthmark!

“Pure chance, yes—in God’s country; but India”—the young civilian made a gesture of finality—“is India.”

Then he raised his hand significantly and ran it through the driven snow of his own hair.

The next moment, like the rest of the group of casuals, he had been hurled from his deck chair and the noise of the end of the world burst on all ears.

The transport *President Lincoln* shook and stopped and began to list.

THE BLESSED DICE

THIS tale is told of that very last voyage for God that Father Francis of Xavier was ever to undertake. The *Santa Cruz*, with mighty belied sail, was dipping through the yellow waters of the China Sea, and already the captain of this Portuguese galleon peered anxiously ahead, for he would make his landfall on the islands of Sancian ere night's dangers came. Father Francis, his passenger, did likewise stand in the shadow of the great red sail and from his high place gaze with eyes of eagerness over the windy seas, for the islands of Sancian meant to him the outer boundaries of a new and mighty land that he would fain win to his Master's kingdom.

Then Father Francis, perforce, came out of his dreams of loving conquest, for he heard with certitude the voice of passion, and it did bellow: "By the holy girdle of the holier Father Francis, spill the devil's bones!"

The Saint, hearing his own name used, most naturally looked about and then below him, and in a sheltered corner of the waist—for Father Francis stood at the break of the poop—he saw a group of lusty soldiers, and they did gamble exceedingly loud.

The voice, Father Francis noted, belonged to one whom his fellow soldiers repeatedly addressed as Peter. Father Francis remarked him

as a bull of a man, stalwart and scarred and iron-gray—true type of the doughty soldier of Portugal. And he at once liked this gambling ram and resolved in his insatiable priestly heart that their acquaintanceship should ripen ere the islands of China crept over the weather horizon—should ripen to Peter's and Christ's benefit.

So Father Francis went below and strolled modestly forward, stopping once to lay the hand of charity on a child's sick brow. And the little one did sleep forthwith. When he came out into the open, cluttered deck space, he saw that the game was over, for the dice lay scattered, and this Peter sat alone, counting over a goodly golden sum. And the speech of Peter, sitting alone at the table, was not a prayer of thanksgiving, though it did concern saints and sacred things.

Nevertheless Father Francis came as one over-deaf, and courteously begged leave of the soldier to rest a while there on the vacant bench. Peter the soldier, with his eyes held by the gains before him, did acquiesce with a rough, impious word. Then he jumped to guilty attention, scattering his many coins about his tasseled boots, and his face reddened like an angry sunset when he recognized the gentle Father Francis sitting smiling vis-à-vis.

But the father at once busied himself in helping Peter recover his scattered winnings, and he did congratulate the burly soldier on his evident favors of fortune. For Father Francis had the most winning way in the wide East when he wished to win back a soul to God.

Now he casually recalled pleasant nights of

Navarre and old Paris days and games that he, a young student, played. And Peter did think in his blunt way that holy Father Francis knew not what manner of man he had chosen for his confidences, else he would depart.

But Father Francis talked on, seemingly unenlightened; and Peter listened, at first patiently and then eagerly, to the attractive words and attractive affairs the holy Father did speak of. And when the gong boomed, calling the hour of meal, the soldier brushed up a full fourth of his coins and offered them, with these words:

“Master Father Francis, I am no old man, and, please our God, I shall shake gold out of these devil’s bones for many a year. But for luck’s sake I would very much that you accept of these, a part of an honest soldier’s gains, and use them on some of your most worthy charities.” He pushed the money across the table.

Father Francis with fair words of gratitude thanked Peter.

“Peter, God’s child, I shall pray that our Master, in His Wisdom, send you rare fortune.” He looked down at the scattered idle dice, and then he looked up into the bearded face of the old warrior, and took his departure, still smiling.

Peter treasured in his heart those last words of the holy Father, for the whole East knew that what things Father Francis said happened. He resolved impetuously that he would increase his winnings ere dawn and Sancian came.

So he sought companions and fearlessly wagered his gold on the toss and turn of the fickle cubes. And when Dame Fortune did look his

companions' way, Peter profanely doubled his stakes, holding the words of Father Francis a guarantee of fortune's speedy change.

Into the day played the soldiers, and when it was come morning's strong light, Peter perforce stopped, and what he did possess was his sword and the hardy garments on his back. Gone were yesterday's golden gains and, worse, after them had been thrown Peter's final real and a bag of ducats entrusted to his care to be delivered to a merchant in Sancian Island.

Already the high green slope of that port loomed over the forward horizon, and a few hours later Peter, the penniless, was first to put foot on shore. He knew not where he could find his evening drink and food. He dared not seek the shop of the merchant. Instead he fled to the town's outer parts, and there along the shore he strode and strode.

Truly Peter repented himself for his foolish faith in that Father Francis; but his robust words, though they soothed, did not bring him back a real.

At dark Peter resolved desperate resolves. With these black thoughts hot upon him the soldier turned and sought the hill's trees, where in solitude he might lose his sole remaining possession.

But in the lonely jungle awaited him the last person he wished to see. It was the same Father Francis, standing expectantly there, and he did say:

"Peter. Peter, come and eat. I do expect you overlong."

Father Francis beckoned the desolate soldier to come and sit on the fallen palm beside him, and the father offered him tempting food.

Then, while the hungry Peter took this, Father Francis spoke freely of the flighty donna, Fickle Fortune, and sometimes he nodded slightly when the soldier Peter did most affirmatively agree with his conclusions.

Finally, when Peter ate no more, Father Francis expressed a mild curiosity to see the unlucky dice that had brought swift disaster on poor Peter's wealth.

Peter did shamedly produce them, and Father Francis, taking the cup, shook the cubes most dexterously. Peter's practiced eye noticed this admiringly. The soldier recalled Father Francis' allusions on the galleon, and Peter looked up into Father Francis' face and grinned broadly—the first smile that had enriched poor Peter's countenance since evil had befallen him. Yet Father Francis did not frown—yea, he laughed pleasantly.

Holding the numbered ivories in the palm of his left hand, Father Francis rose and moved his right hand in the air above them.

He handed the dice back to their owner, saying the while: "Peter, always it is the way of our Captain to bring much good out of a little passing evil. So take Don Lucifer's bones and seek your late companions, and with these coins which you did give me last evening for some worthy charity play them another time. Play them"—and Father Francis looked at the old soldier warningly—"play them till the wine in thy cup tastes

sour. Then stop and seek me. I'll await you here."

And to impress Peter the soldier, Father Francis repeated:

"Till the wine in thy cup tastes sour. Go, Peter, I would pray for poor men like us."

It was only on the way toward the lights of Sancian that Peter recalled his forgotten design and remembered it was the food and the words of Father Francis that had given chase to his black resolve.

Quickly Peter found his kind in the low huts where the rude Portuguese with cup and cubes did will to pass the night.

Peter challenged his fellow players of the evening before, and they accepted gladly. Into the hours they quarreled and gambled, and a tide of coins flowed toward the hands of Peter.

Then came a pause in the game, when Peter thirstily lifted his cup, and his sweet wine did turn on his lips exceedingly bitter. He put down the cup with an open expression and called for another. Again the taste of the wine was not sweet, and Peter remembered the warning of Father Francis.

So he pocketed his treasure and his dice, refusing further games. Nor did his companions urge him overearnestly, for they had between them scarcely a score of ducats.

Up rose Peter the soldier, and into the late night he plunged. The sentinel stars kept watch over the white beach of Sancian, and by their lights he retraced his steps toward the black still jungle.

He saw a yellow lantern's gleam ahead, and coming near he saw the Father on his knees, his habit loose to his waist, and his shoulders cruelly cut where he had lashed himself that Peter might win—and be won.

Said the Saint:

“My child, count thy gains. Count them closely.”

Ashamed, Peter reckoned the silver and the gold with which his blouse had sagged. When he came to the last real he did toss up the total, and it tallied close to the double sum Peter had had yesterday—his own money and his trust for the merchant of Sancian.

Gratefully the soldier would have fallen on his knees before Father Francis had not the Father raised him, and taking his broad hand as though it were a trusting little lad's, Father Francis pleaded:

“Peter, Peter, I have my price in your winnings, and it is that you now kneel to God's poor priest and pay to God your debt of repentance.”

Father Francis did leave Peter, and when the soldier called him over, Father Francis came. And there in the faint light of a new day Peter made his peace and received God's pardon on many wild years.

Father Francis laid a light penance on the penitent Peter, for during the night he had laid a heavy one on himself.

Then Father Francis warned Peter to seek at once the merchant's villa.

The soldier fumbled in his blouse and brought

out the several dice. These he did offer to Father Francis, who marveled:

“Peter, God’s friend, would you tempt me? I might in need seek the gambler’s table and lose what were not mine!”

But Peter assured Father Francis with an unwitting oath that he would sooner grasp the devil’s tail than shake these devil’s bones any longer. And then Father Francis did take them, quoting dryly:

“‘By the holy girdle of Father Francis,’ Master Peter, I know not what need I’ll have of dice, but I will gladly keep them as a token of friendship.”

It were these worn dice, found a fortnight later among Father Francis’ mean effects, that did give rise to unworthy rumors among the Portuguese friends of Lucifer. But never a one of these rumors was ever uttered twice by any of that tribe in the presence of the burly Peter. And he did live a score of years after Father Francis of Xavier went Home from the sands of Sancian.

THE COMING OF AMERICA

DURING the tiresome climb up the hill of convalescence—for tropical fever turns taps and drains the last dregs of strength away—any break in the monotony of veranda chair, meals, palmy-edged horizons, and the lighting of the Southern Cross, receives an open-armed welcome. But the event of events is the arrival of the postman, or “dakwallah,” as this brown-legged individual’s distant Yankee equivalent is called.

So this afternoon, when the Sick Sahib saw the khaki uniform and red turban come down the Prince of Wales’ Drive and turn into the shaded compound of Bishop’s House, he naturally brightened. And, later, when Pascale, his venerable “boy,” barefooted and silent as ever, laid the mail by his side, he gave it languidly, what he would have called in his younger days, “the once over.”

There was a “chit” from his Rector, hoping that he might soon be able to return from the Hills to take up his prefecting and teaching again, and there was a postal that made the cryptic remark, “By the last word from God’s country, the Giants have it cinched, but whom they will meet in October is still uncertain; Indians or Yankees.” And the third bit of mail was a letter in a large boyish hand. This the Sick Sahib puzzled over as he slit it open, for the handwriting might equally have been attributed

to three of the "brownies" of his neglected classroom, but it proved to be the workmanship of Rozarinho de Quadros.

After the usual politely expressed hope that "dear Reverend Father's" health was mending, there was a rather frank remark about "that disgusting Master" who was substituting, and "the new rot" he had brought into Sixth Standard.

Then this paragraph: "And since you were took down with the fever a new boy has come into our class. He is of my age, fourteen. And his father is come out to be Consul Sahib for America here in Bombay. He is a very mischievous chap and he is not like any other baba (boy) in the whole school. He is more lively even than Kazi Fatallah. He speaks bally rotten English—excuse, please—like you Americans do sometimes, sir, and he says he is a full blood Sioux."

The Sick Sahib lay back in his steamer chair and a healthy grin brightened up his particular corner of the long stone veranda. For St. Mary's School compound held boys of many nationalities, but among its five hundred, during a year's patriotic investigation, he had been unable to discover any fellow countrymen. As these British Indian "babas" held as dogma that all Yankees who were not cowboys, were Red Indians, a reason for this new arrival's boasted red blood was easily found. And the Sick Sahib felt within him a sudden desire to get well quickly and make the acquaintance of this "full blood Sioux."

But it was to be a "full blooded" fortnight later before he was sufficiently restored to leave the episcopal hospitality of Bishop's House and

be driven through Poona's swarming bazaars to catch the Bombay Mail.

When some hours later the train slowed into the cool of Karjot Station, the Sick Sahib looked out the compartment window for a boy with the morning paper. Then he remembered sadly this was India's coral strand. But he viewed better the usual bright-colored scramble of new passengers, and the khaki-skinned venders, screaming in the vernacular their wares of native sweets and sandwiches and bottled soda. These, offering their trays to the hungry and thirsty, gave a centipede appearance to the railway carriages, as hundreds of brown arms reached out and bargained.

Then it was, he heard a familiar voice, "I say, my Father Sahib! Oh, this is pukka!" And Rahim Peer Laduk, a devout, though diminutive, Follower of the Prophet, and a day scholar member of Sixth Standard, came up to the compartment. He was in evident holiday attire, for his fez was green and gold; his vest, blue silk; and beneath it, his "Prince Albert," long and white; and the same was true of his slim, immaculate trousers, that stopped shortly above bare ankles and bright red leather slippers.

"I go down to Bombay with you." And he motioned imperiously to his coolie to deposit his various bags and tiny boxes in this compartment.

It came out as the train quickened, that Rahim Peer Laduk had remembered something.

"Please, sir, I know one piece of news since you were took down and went up to Poona in the Hills. A strange baba has come into our

classroom. He is of your caste, American, a pukka Red Indian, and he has had many adventures, sir, for one so young."

Rahim's hand went up and removed his gorgeous fez to lay it on the seat beside him. He went on more freely:

"One adventure he was telling out in the compound between classes, and I heard all, sir. His Red Indian name is Bear—Bear—"

The Sick Sahib suggested, "Cat?"

Rahim accepted instantly.

"Yes; my Father Sahib, that is it exactly. But how did Father know?"

"I guessed it, but go on. What happened?"

"Once one day, said this Bear Cat, when he lived in Cohoes village, which is in the wild thirsty blood—how you say it, Father Sahib?—country of the fierce Iroquois, he was in a little Christian mosque, assisting the Black Rope at his services."

"Black what?" questioned the Sick Sahib sharply.

"The Black Rope," replied the Mohammedan boy solemnly, "for, surely, it is the name Red Indians give you Christian 'imans.'"

"Oh! then it's 'Black Robe'," said the Sick Sahib, suddenly enlightened.

"Yes; then this Bear Cat came to the time in the services when he got up to change the Koran—I think Christians call it that—from one side of the altar to the other."

"Koran!" exclaimed the Sahib, who had lost all interest in the side-show sights, offered gratis by the train window. "Koran!" Then, "Oh!

The Book," as he realized Rahim Peer Laduk was attempting to describe the usual activities of an altar boy, moving the Missal before the Gospel.

"Yes, Father Sahib, this Bear Cat he had the Koran grasped in two of his hands, when one band of fierce Iroquois—and they are the fiercest of all Red Indians, sir—came pell-mell down toward the mosque, shooting arrows and crying their war words. Bear Cat told us them but I do not speak their 'bat,' so I cannot tell you them again. But, of course, Sahib, you know the war words of the fierce Iroquois Red Indians?"

The American nodded, accepting the implied knowledge.

This small Mohammedan's black eyes were wide open, for he could see the next scene.

"And, please, sir, while he was grasping in two hands that book, one arrow came flying in tight and it was going into the back of the 'iman' when Bear Cat stuck out the Koran and the arrow stuck in it and it caught his hand too. There was a blooming panic in the mosque. The little 'batchas' cried out, and their mothers said loud words, as women do at such times, sir. But Bear Cat was not a funk. Unmindful of the blood and the pain, he pulled away his bleeding hand and went out alone to meet the fierce tribe of Iroquois."

Rahim went on as though he was repeating a well-beloved passage.

"And he said to them: 'Halt! I am Bear Cat, the Chief's son. You have drawn my young blood and you have frightened my women folks, and,

believe me, you shall bite of the dust.' But just then—and it was jolly lucky, I think—Bear Cat's father, Chief Lone Horse, and many other Sioux braves rode pell-mell upon their ponies down the Troy Road and killed out all those fierce Iroquois dead. I have finished, Father Sahib."

Rahim sat back, and picking up his trim green and gold fez, replaced it. Only the rattle of the rails was audible in the train compartment after this slaughter, till the boy added:

"This new Sioux baba has told us many more 'chota kannies' (short stories) of his life in the plains, and he is always willing to tell more. He says it is a very dangerous country, America, and he is jolly glad to come out here to our India, where it is safer, sir."

The Sick Sahib thought it pertained to the better part to let this observation pass, at least till he had met this imaginative "Sioux baba" in the flesh.

The Mail now was crossing Thana Creek, leaving the Asian mainland for the sea islands, and before it stopped completely in Thana Station, Rahim Peer Laduk had suddenly forgotten dangerous Red Indians in a more pressing, personal danger. For he was balancing himself, boy fashion, over the edge of the window, yelling in shrill vernacular to a vender of native sweets.

The Sick Sahib listened interestedly to this pan-native dialogue, for it was still a novelty to watch the instant switch from English speech and English ways to native tongues and native manners, that boys of all color in British India possess.

In the middle of the bargaining, Rahim withdrew himself into the compartment to announce: "Wali is here, Father Sahib." And the next moment, the brown, handsome face of Wali Shivarlam Goolam, a Brahmin classmate, appeared at the doorway of the train compartment.

He salaamed ceremoniously.

This high caste boy, maybe an inch less than Rahim in height, wore a high piled yellow turban. The Brahmin cord showed across his brown chest, and the spotless "dhoti" looped over each bare thigh. His stockings were nature's own, and each little big toe held in place the comfortable sandal.

The two boys spoke hurried Hindustani and the Sick Sahib caught enough of the conversation to understand that the Mohammedan was telling the Hindu to see his father at once and get permission to travel the rest of the way to Bombay in the Sahib's compartment. Wali disappeared with promptness and, as the train began to move, he reappeared and was immediately dragged into the compartment by Rahim.

Wali was breathless, but not incapable of doing ample justice to the sticky piles of native sweets that Rahim had deposited on the long seat.

The Sick Sahib, shortly after his arrival in India, had made a resolution, and so he declined to partake of the offered sweets.

"I know, Father, what you would accept, if Rahim offered it to you." Wali's sunshine smile was turned upon the Sahib. "It is what you Americans call 'the hot dog,' is it not? How do your native venders say it? 'They are all hot.

Red hot. Get them over here. Hot dogs! R-r-red hot!”

The Sick Sahib suffered a relapse, for that, coming from an Indian Brahmin boy, burst like shrapnel in this train compartment.

“Wali Goolam! Where in the world did you learn that ‘spiel’ about ‘hot dogs?’” demanded the Sahib, dropping unconsciously into American.

But Wali looked at his Mohammedan seatmate, and both fez and turban nodded knowingly.

A sure suspicion came to their Class Master.

“I know now, you needn’t tell me. There is only one possible source of such information in St. Mary’s compound and—”

“Yes; Bear Cat Shaw,” said Rahim, and Wali Shivram Goolam repeated the name almost jealously. Then he added:

“This new boy told us also that the best place in the States to get these ‘hot dogs’ is at a wonderful island nearby New York.” The Hindu boy’s eyes grew wistful and he repeated solemnly, “I would very much, Father Sahib, wish to make a pilgrimage to this island of wonders, where such delights are!”

“‘Island of wonders’ near New York! I do not place it. What did Shaw tell you?”

Wali drew his bare legs up under him, and settled thus, like a boy Buddha, readily began to retell these delights. Rahim ate contentedly, a far-away look in his dark eyes as though he were seeing heavenly sights that lie under far Western horizons.

“Young Dickie told me that this island of wonders is right by the black water and you go out

to it by trams that run under the river and under the very bazaars of, of—”

“Brooklyn?” volunteered the Sahib.

“Yes: if that is the name of the district of New York City, where many of the high caste ‘New Yorki’ have their bungalows.

“He said out once one day that all communities mingle down there, and the crowds at the bathing ghats of the ocean are thick as at Benares, sir.

“There are two big compounds on this island and you pay silver to get in. One of them has a tower made of electric lights, but it is the different things there that are ripping. There is nothing sad, sir. You ride in boats and you dash down a chute of wood pell-mell into real water and you do not get wet. That seems impossible but he is willing to wager that it is so. But it is the other compound that I imagine I would prefer, sir. Young Shaw called it ‘The Steeple-chase Gardens,’ or like that, where you can enjoy yourself with fifty different delights for one rupee.

“There are horses of wood and iron, sir, on which natives ride and race other horses of wood and iron and the one who is jolly lucky to come home ahead gets another ride free. And there are other wooden horses, clothed like the stallions of rajahs, Father Sahib, and on these you go around and around and around—but you do not grow dizzy, sir—and each time you pass there is a ring in a thing and if you pull out the black ones you get nothing, but if you pull out the golden one—only young Dickie says it is not real gold—you get another ride free. And there is a

swimming bath, and Dickie says that it is the largest in the world and many of the natives bathe there, and Dickie says that he dove into it often from a height of more than fifteen feet. Do you think this is so, or is he a bit of a pill, sir?"

The Sahib parried this by saying:

"We will have to see young Dickie diving at Mahalakshmi Baths to answer that. But from what you babas say of this chap, I would not be surprised."

"But it is in the evening, when more natives than there are in Bombay come down to this island of wonders that it must be more beautiful than the Taj Mahal, and I have seen that two times, and once by moonlight, Father Sahib.

"The towers, like temple towers, are all covered with strings of electric lights, and cords of electric lights, lakhs of them, sir, make the fronts of buildings look ripping when it is night—yellows and reds and greens and some blues.' He says it looks like New Jerusalem, which is the Christian place of Heaven."

Wali Goolam dropped his hands into his lap and unconsciously impersonating a contemplative Buddha, sat silent for seconds. Then he spoke wistfully:

"I would like to see that wonder island some day. But, my Padre Sahib, you have seen this island once?"

"Yes; at least that," truthfully replied this native New Yorker Sahib.

"I do not know its name, but you do, don't you, Father Sahib?"

“Some Americans call it ‘the nation’s playground.’ ”

“No; that is not the name Bear Cat used,” said Rahim suddenly. “That is not the name. I was trying hard to remember it out, while young Wali was telling you. It is like—it is, I have it now!”

The little Mohammedan paused and then just as a guard on “The Seabeach Express” does at the end of the line, he bawled out:

“Coney Island!”

Instinctively the Sick Sahib completed the expression—“All out. Watch your step!”

“Beg your pardon, Father Sahib?” questioned both boys politely.

“I was talking American then. You English-speaking babas would not understand.”

Rahim sighed. Then:

“Maybe, I also will some day see this island of Coney, for I would very much like to race Wali on those iron and wooden horses, but—” and he said it sorrowfully—“but, O rot! we must return to the school so soon.”

And he was right, for already the Mail was on Bombay Island. At Byculla Station in the city, Wali returned to his father’s compartment and Rahim Peer Laduk engaged a blue-clothed coolie, and he and his various small luggage departed. The Sick Sahib gathered his own belongings, for Victoria Terminus was only minutes away.

Out of the Terminus, the Sick Sahib piled into a rickety old carriage, and gave but a casual eye to the green vastness of the Maidan, where down to the distant fringe of feathery palm, that hid

the eternal blue of the Arabian Sea, bare-limbed cricketers batted; and to the strange wares and precious offered to the "subway crush" that flowed by the bazaars of Shaik Memon Street.

At Grant Road, the "gharri" was halted by cross traffic, and, as usual, a Biblical beggar assailed the occupant with his repeated "Bakhshish, Sahib!" Charitably, the Sick Sahib tossed a copper "pice" to the pitiful boy leper, holding up his stumps of hands, and almost instantly saw that several of the rusted lad's companions were afflicted with the same unwholesomeness. Too late he remembered the advice he had forgotten—when you would give an Eastern alms, look before you loosen, and see that the recipient is solitary as the sparrow on the housetop. Otherwise!

The Sick Sahib, having exhausted his Hindustani, was relieved to hear a vigorous young voice speak unscented native words, and the beggars ceased from troubling.

Trevor Casey swung on to the "gharri" step and switching into English, greeted his Class Master warmly. Then he settled himself into the little half seat opposite, with the explanatory:

"Please, Father, I finished up my errand at the Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy Hospital for Father Mac and I am going back to the compound with you."

The Sick Sahib nodded permission to this brown-skinned Eurasian, in whose veins flowed the blood of Erin and Hindustan. And as they rolled along Parel Road, the Sahib said deliberately:

“Quiet in the compound, baba, these days?”

“O my word, Father, but a ripping surprise awaits you! But, wait—and I have learned much, and now I know your game of baseball.”

Trevor pretended to catch an imaginary “liner” in a manner his companion noted would have carried him swiftly back to the J. J. Hospital.

“I know all the positions on the scouting side—the bowler and the backstop, and the other partners out; one base and two base and three base and the little stop. And then the three partners ’way back in the field. You see, Father, what I know. Your baseball is not unlike rounders, sir, which we used to play as little Third Division kiddies over in the Aga Khan Compound, but I do not like it when we are partners in and the ball comes too tight. Nor do the other chaps, sir, except him.”

“Him?” questioned the Sahib, pretending ignorance where he held certitude.

“Oh! he is the ripping surprise. He is teaching us baseball, but you wait till we come by our compound and you shall see.”

Trevor Casey lifted up a grinning brown mug. Then he noticed that the “gharri” had dropped into the usual funeral pace. He turned to the Mohammedan driver and, Kim-like, shot out in the vernacular a native reflection on the horse’s wooden legs. There came an indignant denial from the “gharriwallah’s” seat, accompanied by a vigorous lashing of the poor beast’s back. The “gharri” could easily stay with an auto funeral at its new pace, and Trevor had gained his ob-

jective. He winked knowingly at his returning Prefect.

Off Parel Road the old carriage tossed, and crossing the bridge of the G. I. P. tracks, the Sick Sahib caught first sight of St. Mary's towers above the toddy palms.

Just as the "gharri" turned out of Nesbit Road and into the school entrance, Trevor arose. With an instinctive "Kalos, hai, Sahib"—for this Casey was half native and usually thought in Hindustani—the Eurasian boy bade good-bye and leaped out of the carriage.

A brother American greeted the Sick Sahib, and added:

"Well, there is a surprise here for you. This Asiatic zoo has acquired a young Harlem goat. He's in your Division and you're welcome—"

At that moment both Prefects swung sharply, for they had heard the crash of glass in the compound. They saw a small white figure tearing down toward what they recognized as "first" on an Asian diamond, and St. Anne's Church—that most thoughtlessly had been built in short right—presented a stained-glass window recently ornamented with a jagged hole.

The Prefect on duty left hurriedly, saying:

"That is he, all right." But he added proudly: "Did you see that drive! No other baba in Bombay could line a ball there. I'll send him up to you for a disciplinary talk in ten minutes."

The Sick Sahib sought his own room to change into cool white habit, and to await the coming of Young America, who seemed to be already arrived.

IN THE DAK BUNGALOW

“**B**ACHCHHA” COLLINS, the same old baby pink giant as of old, though now a Deputy and important, had come in his bullock-drawn tonga an hour ago and carried off Almaida—Dr. Almaida, R.A.M.C.—to the Railway Dance at Lonavli. Flight Lieutenant Ivan Guest had begged off, because he had lately taken to walking with a cane—and would for the rest of his days.

He was tired also after the concert, speeches, and hip, hip, hurrahs of the royal reception that his old school had given him—St. Mary’s first D.S.O. in the War—and the bandaged leg was throbbing like the motor of his own machine.

It was hot, even for May, here in the black ease of the dak bungalow, or guest-house of the school, but stretched out in pink pajamas and with comfy “chappels” on his feet, he lit another “Scissors” and thought resignedly of the stifling war hospitals in Basra and sticky Bombay.

Half-way up “The Saddles” a jackal howled and a whole chorus of pariah dogs, somewhere in Khandala village, savagely answered. Something hissed in the looming mango tree and a bulbul fluttered away shrilly. “Jimmy Croakers” sang; the engine of a freight train whistled at the Reversing Station; a damp bat flapped in his face. From the far end of the village came

monotonous Indian songs and the monotonous tom-toming of a native feast. A mosquito hummed, hovering over his right ear. "I say, young aeroplane, don't you attempt a landing here. *Juldi jao.*" His hand swept up and the humming grew faint.

"Lieutenant Sahib," said a voice, and a white-turbaned figure appeared in the black doorway at the side of the latticed gallery. He told his servant he had not called, and the doorway was black again.

The same old hill station, thought the Lieutenant drowsily, as the warm night, with its skeleton of a breeze, fanned him. Same as when, an unhonored little St. Mary's boy, he had spent his May and December holidays here in Khandala.

Then he was paddling up the stream of Memory. The same dear sounds and the same neighboring peaks and the same great ravine, looming black, and their recollections of the Old Boys. Swimming in Second Division Tank and the gray apes, high up the brown black cliffs, chattering their disapproval. Mangoes in May, emerald green, and the delightful, indigestible pickle the "babalog" (the boy folks) made from these fruits. "Gurkha" Nelson's always tasted the best, and he always shared with his "tuck friends." Climbing "Duke's Nose" over there, after guavas in December, and the hooded cobra that had struck above the top of his puttees. How little "Gurkha" had promptly stabbed the triple puncture, and let Death flow harmlessly out. That morning in cold Dhobi Tank, before the sun crept down the high sides of "The Ravine," when

cramps had doubled him up, and "Gurkha" it was again who had splashed out as the others funked, and had pushed and pulled him into the shoals. How "Gurkha" had blushed, when the Prefect had jollied him about saving his "tuck friend."

The convalescent caught himself whispering: "Why, by Jove! I haven't heard a bally word of that chap Nelson since I was ordered to Mesopotamia!"

There was no sound on the path, but there in the darkness, where the fireflies signaled ceaselessly—that bowlegged walk could only belong to one in Asia!—was little "Gurkha" Nelson. "Gurkha" looked man-grown and grayer and there was a wistful patience about him.

"I say 'Gurkha' Nelson, old chap! I'm jolly glad you gave me a look up!" cried the Lieutenant delightedly, "Why! I've just been——" Then, "My blooming leg!" and he was again nursing that member that had won him his decoration by stopping its bit of Turkish anti-aircraft lead some several thousand feet above Bagdad.

"Salaam, Ivan baba." "Gurkha" Nelson gave the old familiar greeting, but there was a wistful softness in his voice, such as one in great sorrow might use.

He settled himself on the third step at Guest's feet. One name brought up another, and they talked as only Sahibs do in India; that land of infrequent meetings.

The Lieutenant eagerly told the latest of this chap and that, who wore the khaki—all but a few years ago white-clad fellow-scholars at dusty St.

Mary's while "Gurkha" listened and occasionally answered Guest's questions of recent history of friends in the Railway and Post and Telegraph, or struggling clerks in Bombay or Poona.

Then, getting into personal waters, the Lieutenant proudly mentioned the money he had come into, when his cousin in far-off "Blighty" died, and Nelson, seemingly emboldened, sketched his struggles to make his monthly rupees last. At last, blurted, like a boy's confession, "Gurkha" told of his failure of a trust, and he concluded wistfully:

"Yes, Ivan baba, I returned all but a fraction of what I took, but justice requires it should be satisfied in full, and, like a lot of other things, I didn't, when I could."

He paused, then looking at Ivan with tremendous wistfulness, said:

"I, I came back to you, and I thought perhaps for the sake of the old days—— Ah! You of the air are generous. Would you do this much for me, Ivan baba?"

He laid a slip of paper at the Lieutenant's feet.

"Do it, and I'll be eternally grateful."

Flight Lieutenant Guest had listened, ill at ease, and now he reached down impetuously, wincing as injured muscles stretched, to take up the paper.

Then he noticed he was alone.

"I say, 'Gurkha'! Nelson Sahib, halt! Explain! Why! Why!" The Lieutenant gazed about him, but the dak bungalow and the path were empty and black in the night, as silently black as the sides of the towering "Saddles."

“Deucedly queer! But the little beggar always was shy.”

The rattle of a tonga distracted Guest. It grew louder down the road from Lonavli. A yellow light swayed drunkenly around the corner into the compound; the rattle stopped before the dak bungalow; and the bullock breathed heavily. “Keep The Home Fires Burning” sang a bass that the Lieutenant had no difficulty in recognizing.

“Bachchha” Collins stopped; then he was resting his bulk on the step, where “Gurkha” Nelson had sat a moment ago.

Dapper Dr. Almaida sank into the low deck-chair, with the exclamation “Sickening!” and began to pour out a dismal tale of the dance and the poor grade of dancers.

Suddenly he exclaimed:

“I say, Ivan baba, ’member little Nelson? He was clerking for those stationers, Thacker & Co., on Hornby Road. ’Member, the chaps called him ‘Gurkha,’ he was so small? You used to be ‘tuck friends’ with him too.”

The Lieutenant nodded with interest.

“Well, a partner told me to-night that he went the fever route three months ago in the J. J. Hospital. Clever chap, careless, but he wasn’t half a bad one.”

Guest sat up unmindful of the stab of pain from his bandaged leg.

“I say, man! Three months ago! Sure o’ that? ’Cause I——” He checked himself, as a sudden thought came.

“Well, I met ‘Big Butter’ Angoorly later.”

The flare of a match held close to his cigarette lighted up the doctor's face for a second. He continued conclusively:

"And he was saying he attended his funeral at Sewree."

"Yes," said Guest slowly. And in an awed undertone: "So that was why he gave me the look up!"

"What d' you say, Ivan?" asked "Bachchha."

"I say, Doc, old chap." The Lieutenant twisted toward Almaida. "I wish you'd look about my chair. There should be a chit thereabouts."

Almaida stooped. "This it?" he said, straightening up and holding out a slip of paper.

"*Bahut salaam!* Thanks." Said Guest carelessly, though his hand shook as he took the chit. "That must be it."

He reached for his pocket flash and read. It was the address of stationers on Hornby Road, Bombay, and below was written a sum.

"Boy!" The aviator raised his voice, and clapped his hands twice. "Boy!"

"Lieutenant Sahib?" The brown-footed servant came out of the dark.

"Boy, cheque-book, my writing-pad, fountain-pen *lao*. *Juldi*, quickly."

Almaida and "the Babe" asked questions in vain.

The servant returned, also carrying a light.

"I say," began Dr. Almaida, "what's the blooming joke?"

"'Buy War Loan,'" quoted "Bachchha," "*Pukka idea!* Do it myself, if I wasn't stony broke."

"You are not giving away money this blooming hour of the night, are you, old top?" said Almaida anxiously. The Flight Lieutenant was technically under his care yet, and there might be a rise in temperature.

"No; it is a privilege to do this," said Guest, consulting the name on the chit, as he wrote by the swaying light. "Rupees 180 right." Blotting and tearing out the cheque, he continued:

"Ah, Doc, there are more things in purgatory and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy, as the 'Bara Sahib' might have written."

"Misquoting William of Avon at this hour! It's this night air. I expected it. Give us your pulse, old chap." The R. A. M. C. reached anxiously, but the aviator waved his hand aside.

"Not fever, Doctor. So little 'Gurkha' went West three whole months ago!"

"Boy!"

"Lieutenant Sahib."

Flight Lieutenant Ivan Guest, R.F.C., was sealing the envelope. "Boy, *juldi* post at the station to catch the Bombay Mail."

And to the two white figures, who were watching his actions curiously:

"I say, you chaps can sit here gassing all night, but I must go to communion in the morning. Good night!"

FELLOW VOYAGERS

IT WAS well past midnight and shadow quiet, when she came out on the deep veranda again. The silver light of night lay on the lawn and the landscape beyond. In blacks and gleaming whites lay sleeping Fort Wadsworth, while above and beyond, lone lights, yellow dots on the Staten Island shore, kept vigil. The Narrows rippled vividly and the silhouette of a moored destroyer, black but for her riding lights, was cut into the waters.

She saw but little of this tranquil scene, that to her had become another Garden of Olives. Finally, her fresh, sharp memories and this sacrifice it hurt to make, forced her to her knees, and she rested her head on the column. All the plans of years fallen like dead leaves! India, under the far eastern horizons! And she had dreamed her son's ministries might be in this New York, or nearby Philadelphia. What valid claims had those distant brown millions with their Macedonian cry more imperative, more impelling, than the cry of the pagan millions of Eastern America!

Her heart grew hard under the thought. With the day's dawn his high ship would glide through these Narrows and grow small and he would, perhaps, pass out of her earthly sight. There was yet time to seek the dock and pray him for her

sake, at least, to stop. She would not drain this cup forced to her old lips. Strength came to her with this new resolve.

Then she rose hastily from her knees and turned to face the sound of gravel crunching on the path. A wild, joyous thought that he had returned to tell her he would not sail swept over her and she peered eagerly out.

Coming up the moonlight, she thinks she saw a man and a group of deep-skinned children, small and tall; all strangely clad in loose white. The man raised his right hand and, at once, the young group spread over the lawn and sat, like stone idols, cross-legged in a silent, intensely expectant semicircle. Somehow she thought of children at a party and the happy announcement of ice cream.

Then he, their leader, came forward and faced her from the veranda's steps. She saw at once he was some kind of poor priest, for he wore a long dark habit and it was patched wretchedly. A cincture girded him and in it was thrust a crucifix, worn and blackened. He was not tall and his beard seemed black brown. His face was innocent and most winning and it seemed as though light, brighter than moonlight, went out from it. All these details of his person she noticed by that light.

"Pardon, but isn't this Father Paul's mother?" The voice was low and there was in it that suggestion of distant organs, touched by master fingers. "My Father Paul's mother?"

She thinks she said, "Yes, Father," rather proudly, rather sadly.

“Then we are welcome, the little ones and I, to tarry here awhile, awaiting the others? We do not need to meet his ship till morning’s tide, you know.”

She thinks she answered him and he said:

“Thanks. I knew it.”

She did not ask him his name or question him about his strange request. She kept watching his countenance, for it seemed strangely that of a friend she just could not place. Through Father Paul she knew so many.

He was standing now on the top step, one hand lightly against the column, and the other fondling the cross in his girdle, and he said, as though he was taking up the thread of a conversation momentarily interrupted:

“You know, of course, Father Paul’s mother, we, the little ones and I, come to your land often and we will come oftener in the glad new days, for your land is the hope that will not fail my poor continent.”

His hand left his girdle and swept into a gesture eastward, over Fort Hamilton and Coney Island, way and far beyond.

“Back in the other days when I, a lad, heard wondrous tales of this new land, tales first brought back by Don Christopher and his fellow mariners, I loved this land. And I thought this new land across the western seas, and its red peoples and its red gold, were part of the Indies. When, later, my holy Father Ignatius willed my obedience east, I imagined I was coming to these Indies.

“Those were other days, long forgotten, and I

have since learned wiser things—a broad Pacific lies between mine own continent and yours; but you see, don't you, Father Paul's mother, that my love for your land is an old, old love?"

His arms swept out in an unconscious gesture of affection.

He continued:

"With pride I have watched this new land grow into a radiant young mother of men. I have watched the best of Europe seek her soil. And with deeper pride I have seen the children and the children's children of these many nationalities mingle into the head waters of a new nation, a new race. Even in face and form and speech they grow one.

"And to the aid of these children's children, while they were a young people, came priests of Mother Church out of the Old World, priests after my own heart, who toiled long days that the Faith might not die down in the breasts of these children's children. And that it has burnt brighter is their glorious boast. For nowhere in the world does Faith flame as it does in this young motherland.

"Long have I wished for sons of this mother to labor in my allotted vineyards, and now my desires are not to be in vain. Like God's own Mother, never was it known that any land in trouble has called on this motherland in vain. Neither shall I for my continent."

The priest in the moonlight looked into the distance, beyond the sleepy gleams of Tompkinsville and St. George, as though he was seeking something. Then his gaze rested in the north, where

over the Bay faintly showed a steady light, like that of an evening star. He pointed it out exultingly:

“Over there stands your symbol, your Lady Liberty with her eternal light aloft. I have always admired her for the new hopes she has lit in immigrant hearts, but today I like to think of her as a new symbol.”

He stopped and his eyes flashed as he continued intensely:

“I like to think of her as Mary of America, holding high the torch of Holy Faith—not only for her own fair land, but, as she partly faces my poor East, for my dear lands.

“That’s why I have come, and will come to these shores of promise.”

The priest was silent and when he spoke again it was softly, as though half to himself:

“I have one such in Father Paul. He is one of the pioneers, who realizes that the debt he owes for Faith is to be paid, not back to Catholic Europe, but to pagan Asia. One of the first of the Yankee lads he is, to whom this debt has come home.”

Then he turned to Father Paul’s mother again.

“Years ago some Irish or some French or some English mother stood at the door of her broken home, as you stand tonight; sad at heart, for in the morning a priestly son would sail into the west to this new land. These mothers drank to the dregs of their cups, knowing that they in their turn were paying thus their debt to Faith. Their sons went forth to their missionary ministries strengthened doubly by those silent sacrifices.

“And with those sons sailed, as fellow-voyagers, my brothers Patrick and Augustine, and my maiden sister, Joan, and many others. Those European mothers saw with the vision of strong faith those fellow-voyagers, and they were glad that their sons had been accepted in such company and assured of much aid.

“Now in God’s design that cup is offered to American mothers’ lips that like sons go into my needy East.”

He paused, and then he said abruptly:

“But first, Father Paul’s mother, see! Father Paul does not sail alone, neither will he labor unaided.”

He pointed to the semicircle of children, who had sat cross-legged on the lawn, obedient to his last command.

“These are the little ones, who in their day accompanied me from village to village. They were my valiant Tenth Legion, who rang their bells and did do wonders, that men mistakenly said were done in my name. These, these now come with me to sail in the high ship and accompany Father Paul back to our land. And they are not alone his fellow-voyagers. For see.”

The priest stood aside and Father Paul’s mother now noticed that the lawn and beyond the hedge, as far as she was able to gaze, had filled up with a still crowd.

Back of the silent, chosen companions of this priest, there were brown babies, like the stars on a starry night, and fields of turbaned men and shawled women in flowing garb. There were, here and there, white men with priestly faces, and

some of these bore wounds that flashed like great jewels. No man could number that still crowd. Said the priest, now at her side:

“Mother, we are his fellow-voyagers. We sail at morning’s tide with Father Paul.”

He stood erect and there was power in his voice.

“And I go with him and I stay with him, like his other angel, for I am a faithful guardian of all who come to break the Bread to my continent.”

He gave the signal as a general would, and the vast escort commenced to flow toward the city and the dock.

“Now, salaam, daughter. Be of strong heart, won’t you?”

“I will, Father Francis,” she answered. She does not know why she said “Father Francis,” but she knows she did.

The priest put his hand to his forehead in Eastern fashion. Then priest and fellow-voyagers had dissolved like mist.

Father Paul’s mother was looking out across the clean, moon-swept lawn to the deserted Shore Road, and the still waters, and the dark Staten Island hills beyond.

It was yet hours before dawn, and she could easily have motored to the city and the dock. But in her heart no such desire remained, for she was now of those apostolic mothers, who had taken up the cup eagerly, and had drained it to the dregs, and had found its drink not bitter, but exceedingly sweet.

A few brief hours ago Father Paul had stood

here in the deep veranda with her in his arms. He had taken her last kisses and whispered, half mysteriously:

“Now, Mother, peace and joy. I’ll pray that you may see what I see and then you’ll be glad.”

Then he had blessed her, without letting her kneel, and the auto had whirled him up the same Shore Road to New York and the great ship that sailed on the morning’s tide.

Today the home on the Fort Hamilton bluff differs in few externals from its neighbors. From its lawn it is forever looking across the Narrows at still Fort Wadsworth. A still emerald sea is the lawn and smooth shaven.

Recently its surface has been broken, and that was when an old dory, wide and stubby, was hauled out of decaying obscurity and fresh painted, and half buried in the lawn before the home. The bright flowers that grow profusely between its gunwales, and the green vine that is beginning to twine up its mast, still have a florist’s look to them. If you look closely over the polled hedge, you will notice a black strip with the name “PAUL” on either bow, and that the old dory is forever headed into the east. This is no accident, but deliberate design. For Father Paul’s mother is responsible for the resurrection of that boyhood dory, and the direction in which it lies.

Her neighbors and her friends know that her thoughts, yea, even her heart, is being borne out to the East these days. Yet none of her neighbors, her many friends, would rate her as sad or

melancholy. For there is a quiet cheerfulness goes out from her presence that is refreshing. This puzzles her many acquaintances, who do not share her secret. All they know and gossip about is the shame of it and the pity.

HER FAVORITE TONGUE

TREVOR CASEY must have started the argument, for he had inherited from his Sergeant parent strong opinions, and, as our compound knew to its cost, the gift of expressing them fluently, and on occasions, forcibly. Anyway, he it was who charged into me some three feet in advance of the other two.

“Please, Father Sahib, we’ve had a bit of a discussion, and we knew that you, sir—” he stopped with innate diplomacy and I accepted silently the implied deference.

This chocolate-ice-cream-skinned Eurasian had all the tweedling tongue of his Celtic father, when he wished confirmation of his opinion by authority. But I had had him under my charge a little too long to be caught with that chaff.

“Perhaps, if Naomi—” I addressed the fat boy from Bagdad, “would start at the beginning, I might after mature deliberations give judgment. So, Naomi?”

“Padre Sahib, what does ‘mature deliberations’ from you mean, sir?”

Naomi Djadjohni had only come out of Mesopotamia at the outbreak of the Great War and he was still wrestling to his own improvement with the ‘*bat*’ of the Sahibs.

“Stupid! The Father means we will each tell him our side, and then he will—”

Rozarinho De Quadros played the light of his dazzling smile on me. If there is somewhere in Goa a Blarney Stone, Rozarinho has hung by his heels to kiss it.

“He will what?” I said unguardedly.

“He will say I’m right.”

And again I was enriched with a vision of milky teeth, that the brown face set off even in the starlight.

But it was slim Dickie Shaw, a year from “the States,” who cut the knot with his direct:

“Come, and sit down on that bench, Father, and I will slip you the straight dope.”

Somehow, Dickie, the lone Yankee boy among St. Mary’s hundreds, had managed, in spite of most alien surroundings, to hold and use his American.

We moved across the compound, keeping a wary eye on the grass for vipers and scorpions, to the low bench directly under the acetylenes. In the wide verandas of our Boys’ Barracks played Second Division, boisterously and shrilly, as boys will in the welcome cool of the tropical evening here in the hill station. Their white or khaki-clad figures flittered in and out of the yellow oblongs of the dormitory doorways, like giant moths, and every once in a while a score overflowed out of the semi-gloom of the long galleries into the lit spaces of the compound.

Not until I had found a match and it flared up, did Dickie begin.

“Please, Father, it is this way. This here Trevor-baba—” (Dick was his senior by a matter of weeks, but there was the vast tolerance of age

for silly youth in his voice) “says that she speaks only—what is it?—Gælic and—”

“Sure I did not, Father. What I told Dickie Shaw was, she prefers my father’s tongue before—”

“Not Portuguese. It is impossible and absurd!” This from Rozarinho with a serious waving of his hand, palm out—the universal Indian negation.

“ ’Tis Arabic, my pretty tongue, she speaks better of all.” And Naomi added: “Padre Sahib, what you know?”

I must confess I had not quite caught the drift of these pleas for recognition, for, like all late-comers to a discussion, the use of the pronoun instead of the proper noun, darkened my understanding.

I turned to my small fellow-countryman for light, holding a restraining hand against the eager trio.

“*Sabr karo*. Have patience. Now if Dickie will talk connectedly, and you others will hold your peace awhile.” For Naomi’s sake, seeing the puzzled look come into his face, I changed that to: “You other babas will not talk one word, why, then, I might, perhaps, learn just what it is all about. *Chup raho, babalog!* Keep quiet, boys. Dickie!”

Given silence, Dickie Shaw stated the case with inherited Yankee directness.

“Well, Father, it’s like this. These kids say Our Lady likes best of all their lingo, and I’ll say—and I’ll bet you too!—she prefers to speak

United States before any other old '*bat*' there is going. Ain't I right, Father?"

Our Lady's favorite mode of speech had never struck me in that way. Arabic, Portuguese, Gælic, and American. It was a broad choice this compound argument had given her in one sense, yet recalling the Tower of old and its linguistic curse, it was narrow.

That she might be polyglot in her preference was one solution that flashed up as I smoked—the four pairs of eyes regarding their chosen Delphi intently—but suddenly realizing that I had the Prefect, Second Assistant, and the two Sacristans of our Junior Sodality before me, I rejected that for one more practical, and if she were gracious, more convincing to this audience.

"Back in that land, that Dickie-baba deserted to come out east—"

"Say, Sahib, how do you get that way? You know when Daddy became Consul in Bombay, Mother sent me along for company, 'cause she couldn't come herself. Why, I wouldn't—"

One argument was ample, so I hastily amended:

"Back in the States, we have a saying that there is one easy way to find out anything, and that is—" I stopped and, as I had expected, Rozarinho concluded the sentence.

"—to do it."

"*Atchcha*. Good, Rozarinho-baba! So, if you curious seekers for Mother Mary's pet language would really like to find out, why not ask her for a special favor, each one in his own tongue, of course, and—see, it will be Christmas in ten days

—report to me on Christmas Day. She very likely would not listen to mischievous chaps like you at all, but being the holiday season, she might stretch a point.”

It was a plausible scheme and was instantly accepted.

“Jolly good, I’ll start asking her tomorrow for—”

I held up a traffic cop’s hand and halted Rozarinho.

“No; keep it dark, or as it says on your holiday boxes, ‘Do not open till Christmas.’ Then that afternoon we will hold the next session. This discussion is adjourned till a week from Tuesday.”

Then Dickie and Naomi discovered a scorpion occupying the same bench with them and, naturally, our argument sought refuge among forgotten things.

It was close to swimming time on Christmas afternoon, when I was reminded of something I had rather completely forgotten.

Rozarinho De Quadros came racing over to where I stood in the deep veranda. He was clothed in spotless holiday white and off his ear fluttered a new khaki tie with a group of Allied flags embroidered at its base. He held an evident holiday box in his hands and the crumbs of Christmas were on his lips.

“Please, Father Sahib, she prefers Portuguese, for see!” And he dug into the tissue paper to unearth a Huntley and Palmer tin of assorted biscuits. “I asked her that very evening to send me some for today and in this box

from one aunt in Cawnpore are my favorite kind too! May I offer you three, Father, please?"

But I was interrupted by the rapid appearance of the usually slow-moving Naomi. He flashed around the corner of the veranda, a pinkish cablegram waving in his excited hand.

"Oh! Padre Sahib, I am happy, I could cry! Oh! See, and on this very day too! It is from my father and he say—"

" 'Says' you should say," corrected the Goan boy, with his superior command of our common vehicle of expression.

But this interruption went unheeded in the excitement of the Bagdadi boy's news.

"—he say my dear mother and Ruth, my bigger sister, are both safe and home again. You know, the wicked Turks took them up the Tigris before the British came to my city, and I heard one word never till this day. And that was what I asked the Lady Mary all these nights in my dear speech and she has heard my prayer."

He looked at Rozarinho and he looked at me, and tears were nearby as he exclaimed:

"Do not the Lady Mary like my Arabic better?"

I had known the ominous still months Naomi Djadjohni had spent, like other of our Bagdadis, awaiting and dreading the news that only would come, after General Maude and his Tommies had entered Bagdad and communications were once more re-established with India, and it looked as though this answer would give the preference to that old tongue. But I remember there were two more parties to this argument and I said:

“We haven’t heard from Trevor and Dickie yet. Give them a look up, Rozarinho-baba, and let us hear their reports.”

“Please, Father, Dickie has gone down to the station to meet the Poona Mail. He expects his father, the Consul Sahib, up, and I know what Trevor Casey wanted and got. He asked in Gælic for some tin to purchase sweets and I saw Father McGlinchey hand him rupees three that the postman brought him with the letters. And he has gone into the bazaars to buy ‘*chowpattis*’ and tuck.”

Rozarinho stopped suddenly and began to grin sheepishly, for he had recalled Khandala bazaar with its breath of plague was distinctly out of bounds and he was speaking to a Prefect. It was Christmas and not the time a Yankee Prefect could be strict, so I had to say:

“I am a little deaf with all this noise. What were you saying, Sonny-baba?”

He gave me a wink of understanding and continued:

“Father Sahib, Trevor was stony broke and he asked Our Lady for some shiners and she sent him three.”

“Well, that leaves Dickie to report and as soon as he comes back we will see what he has to say for the American tongue.”

But Dickie had not materialized when the swimmer-minded of Second Division assembled at the end of the compound, their bathing breeches and towel strapped around their waists, giving each the casual appearance of being provided with a life belt. I blew the second whistle

to hurry the usual stragglers and we ebbed into the road.

Khandala village, a medley of palms, thatched huts, and yellow temple-domes sleeping in the equatorial glare, straggled up to the foot of the towering "Sausages." That is our compound nickname for this corrugated range of the Western Ghauts.

Down the road ahead, in twos and threes, tramped the barekneed Second Division. Most were sheltered under their sun helmets, that give British Indian boys a squat appearance, but some still wore the bright-colored paper hats, that had come with a "pop," when they had burst the Christmas dinner favors. These are a scant protection against the December sun, but, somehow, the Indian born, white or brown, manage to escape sunstroke.

A Prefect's place is somewhat like a good general's, so I was bringing up the rear, and Naomi, Rozarinho, and Trevor Casey formed my immediate convoy.

Trevor had evidently had "a healthy hack" of native sweets, for he was over-generous in offering his companions a share from his well-stocked pockets.

We were discussing ice skating—that is, I was attempting with difficulty to describe that flying holiday sport to boys who had never seen frozen water, except in a glass or on an occasional cinema screen—when Trevor interrupted me with a sudden:

"I say, Father Sahib, please look."

I stopped and followed the direction of his hand.

Coming down the dusty road from Khandala station was a two-wheeled tonga and in it was Dickie Shaw and with him were an European gentleman and a lady.

I had no difficulty in recognizing the lean and lanky American Consul of Bombay, but the lady in white was a complete stranger.

Dickie had seen us, for he waved like a happy convent girl, and placing a hand on the tonga bullock, he leaped out, recovered himself and started racing ahead of the native cart.

Quite out of breath he tore up and his eyes were dancing blue fires. Likewise, he was chewing gum, and chewing-gum is not for sale in British India.

He shouted exultingly:

“Oh, boy! Father, some Christmas gift! What d’yer think I got?”

“Why, peppermint gum isn’t so bad for this country, and a parent in person is a rather acceptable present for this season. I suppose you are going to tell us, Dickie, that is what you teased Our Lady in American to send you.”

“Wrong dope, Sahib. The better is yet to come!”

He flung to the trio of my escort condescendingly:

“Sorry, I can’t go swimming with you kids this after’, but I got company. Just wait till they get nearer. No: come along. I want to introduce you all.”

I have seen boys happy, usually through a di-

rect appeal to their stomachs or the announcement of a bolt-from-the-blue holiday, but Richard Shaw bore all the external symptoms of ecstasy.

We four turned aside from the road to the swimming-tank and moved down to meet the approaching station-wagon. Dickie, beside himself, had already flown back.

The turbaned native driving, checked his creamy bullock, and I shook hands heartily with the Consul. For, somehow, any meeting with the representative of your native land, brings home and folks quickly overseas.

Then Mr. Shaw said:

“Father, I want you to meet my—”

But Dickie interrupted:

“Father, I want you to meet my own mother.”

He turned exultingly to the three boys, who stood silent and self-conscious in the presence of these fair strangers.

“Yah! you and your Portuguese and your Arabic, and that there Irish tongue—whatever you call it. Yah! I asked Our Lady in straight United States for what I wanted, and here she is all dolled out in a new suit.”

He shot around accusingly and faced the smiling Consul.

“Daddy, why didn’t you tell me she was coming out from America, instead of keeping it all dark and near giving me heart-failure down at the station? And, Mother—more of his old camouflage—Dad made me write you a long Christmas letter last November, too. I bet he never posted it neither!”

The Consul Sahib made a remark about his son

being grammatically wrong, but substantially correct.

In the middle of this torrent, I reached and shook hands with Dickie's American Christmas present.

Then we soon left them, for Dickie was over-eager to escort his guests to the dak bungalow, where he could help them unpack their luggage, and we hastened after Second Division.

Trevor and Naomi and Rozarinho kept frozen silence all along the hot road to Lonavli, but as we turned out and, skirting Blind Man's Well, dropped down the jungle trail to the tank, I think, Trevor touched the current of thought that was flowing in each mind, when he stood stock still on a boulder in our path and said:

"Father Sahib, the next time I want a blooming thing from Our Lady, I'm going to keep asking and asking her in her favorite tongue."

And Rozarinho and the boy from Bagdad exclaimed simultaneously:

"I'll say so!"

Nearby in the lower jungle we could already hear the splash of Monkey Falls and shrill happy shouts.

THE CORDS OF ADAM

THROUGH the long, open oblong and the branches of the huge camphor tree, Father Neacy could look across the low gray roofs of his village, broken by the higher structure of the Shinto temple, with its golden cigar-shaped beams, and beyond to the pinkish haze of myriad cherry blossoms and the smiling blue plain of the Inland Sea. A cluster of white oblong specks, brilliant against the western sun, showed the home-coming fishing sampans. And away to the eastward, where the steep, emerald islands merged to give a landlocked look to The Sea, was the smudge of smoke of the T. K. K. liner, that had been abeam a half an hour ago; the *Shinyu Maru*, San Francisco bound.

Father Neacy sighed contentedly, and then he opened again the gilt-edged Scriptures he had been reading. His eye rested on a verse. He read it. Then he re-read it slowly, as though it had started a pleasant chain of memories. A faint smile ventured around the corners of his mouth. He closed the big black book and lay back in the steamer chair.

Away fell Shimbashi, his Maryknoll mission village; away fell the high volcanic peaks of Japan. The still blue Pacific world, that the fast steaming *Shinyu Maru* would take fifteen days to crawl across, was spanned in a flash. Up came

brown Diamond Head and the fair bow of Waikiki Beach. And Father Neacy had a picture of the Honolulu Cathedral compound with its gray, "Frenchy" statue of Our Lady, her hair "done up." Then he was on the Pacific again and in a twinkling up came the jagged Seal Rocks and the yellow overhanging Cliff House, its many windows dazzling in the low sun, and the green and golden glory of The Gate. A wild, almost continental leap, with its blur of smiling California, frosted Rockies, the lonely, sea-like prairies, the broad Mississippi, flat Illinois, and, plump, he was back in his boyhood Chicago.

Two decades, three decades dropped away, and Father Neacy had shrunk to "Genie" and he was standing at a parlor bay-window, looking out at the iron picket fence. Just beyond, by the black lamppost, a cab had stopped. The driver, sitting precariously aft, leaned over and raised a doll trap-door, and he was speaking to one within. He pointed toward the red-and-white residence, pointed, Gene thought, directly at him, and Gene remembered bashfully dropping the lace curtain and peering through its protection.

Out of the cab got a stout man, low and swarthy, with a curious bag, green and yellow, in each hand. Then Gene saw a tiny boy peep timidly out. At a shout from the man with the bags, he gave a leap and landed easily beyond the carriage step. After the cabby drove off, the two opened the iron gate and came up the white flagged walk, "Jack," the wiry terrier, valiantly barking, but timidly advancing at their heels.

Gene listened for the ring of the door-bell, and

he was with his father, when he opened the door and heartily greeted the two. The man spoke strange English, "as if he was feeling his way in the dark," thought Gene. But the boy, no taller than the man's hip, looked at Gene with pleading, oval eyes. At once those pleading eyes of the boy fascinated Gene. He followed the strangers into the green-walled parlor and sat on the edge of a chair, while his father and the dark man talked circus and mutual show acquaintances.

Gene saw the boy with those pleading, slit eyes watching the long-limbed, wooden monkey that hung from the beady Japanese curtains, separating the two parlors, and after a while Gene pointed silently to the trio of carved monkeys on the mantle, that by gesture advertised they saw, heard, and spoke no evil. Gene impersonated the trio smilingly, but the other boy did not even smile. Then Gene went and, stretching, reached down the brown group. Crossing the carpet, he put the statuette in this boy's hand, saying:

"It's mine, but I'll let you look at it. It comed from Japan."

"I come from Japan," said the boy slowly, and then Gene's father had stopped talking to the man and had said:

"See, Yoshiteru, the kids are friendly already."

And both boys sank back onto their chairs, frozenly silent.

Then when the men smoked and talked again, Gene had whispered:

"My name's Gene, and what's yours?"

Gene's eyes had opened wide, when the other had replied:

“Taro; but with the show they call me ‘Six Dollars.’ You may call me ‘Six Dollars’ if you like. And I like monkeys, don’t you, too?”

Later that night Gene learned from his mother that Yoshiteru and Taro were to live at the house till Spring, when the Barnum Show would go on the road again; that little “Six’s” mother had just died in a hospital, and Gene should be very kind to him.

Then followed for Gene a wonderful winter. Every day, down in the stone basement by the warm furnace, the two guests spread their mat, and went through their tumbling; for constant practice is the price of tumblers’ nimbleness. Gene used to stand, eyes front, and watch the tiny boy in the yellow tights roll up like a porcupine, and then Yoshiteru, lying on the mat, would turn “Six” with his feet. Now slowly, now dizzily, now throwing him up and down, like a glass globe in the jet of fountain. There was one afternoon, when something went wrong and the yellow ball landed on the cruel floor. And yet “Six” never whimpered, though he walked lame for two weeks after that, and there was no afternoon practice.

At table Gene used to watch “Six Dollars” as he would look at his father, begging permission to eat a certain dainty, but though almost invariably Yoshiteru would frown and shake his head, “Six” would never, never complain. Maybe, sometimes, if it would be an especially tempting dainty, Gene might hear just a zephyr of a sigh from the tiny creature at his side.

Then when the green months came, “Six” and

his father left for the White Tops, and Gene felt lonely that Spring.

* * * * *

Father Neacy half opened his eyes and he saw the red temple "torii" through the pines, and he heard faintly the eternal booming of a temple tom-tom. Then his eyelids drooped, for another memory was visualizing.

Country folks and their excited children, in overalls and whites, lined either side of an Illinois town street. Gene was sitting alongside of "Sheep," the driver, looking down on the easy reins above the dappled gray quarters of the four horses that drew the float. Behind him, so called "Samurai," black and golden warriors, grouped under a swaying red "tori," or arch, and at the forward edge of this group stood with folded arms little "Six" in his blue-spangled tumbling tights. On the side of the heavy float in thick golden letters was the word "JAPAN."

As the circus parade lumbered over the rickety wooden bridge, Gene recalled looking down into the clear green water and seeing a shiny-backed turtle sunning on a rock. He pointed it out to "Six" and looked ahead.

Then something clutched at his hip, as it pitched off the circus wagon and under the heavy front wheels. The float rose and bumped down. There were shouting and screams, and a breaking of the two parallel lines of spectators. "Sheep," at Gene's side, was straining at the reins, that had suddenly become steel bars running out over the dapple gray backs.

When they lifted little "Six" he was just breathing, and Gene suddenly remembering, looked at the smooth gliding water, showing at the bridge side. Then he was dashing down the bank and he returned with an old tin can filled with water. Wiggling through the crowd, he tugged at the elbow of the pointed bearded stranger, who was bending and feeling the crushed little figure.

"Here's water," whispered Gene, "and if you are a Cath'lic?" The doctor nodded slightly. "Well, 'Six' ain't. He's nothing but a poor pagan."

The doctor gave the boy a smile of understanding, and then taking the dripping can, poured a tiny stream down and across the unconscious forehead. Then he tried to force some of the remainder through the tight teeth, but as he was doing this, "Six" opened his eyes and giving that zephyr of a sigh was quite still.

Like turning the page of an interesting story, the scene shifted and Gene, now maybe three inches taller, was dressed in his Sacred Heart Cadet uniform and he was walking with his father by the side of a lake in the deserted amusement park. It was March and still raw at Coney, and the big incline of "The Chutes" looked rusty and unpainted after its winter fight with the Atlantic storms. That morning Gene had made his First Communion in the humble church of Our Lady of Solace, that had once been a dance hall, and soon the old fire bell, that now graced the belfry, would ring out and call Gene and the other

First Communicants back to receive another sacrament from the hands of the Bishop.

Father was smoking his deep-bowled pipe and he was saying:

“Son, I’ve been so confounded busy with this new ‘Old Mill’ device, that I haven’t had a chance to run up to the city and get my Genie a gift. But I will tomorrow, and it will be a nice one, son.”

And Gene, plucking up courage, had replied:

“Cap, you don’t need to go to New York to give me the gift I’d like best. It’s—it’s right here in our basement. It’s—it’s the baby one.” And hurriedly, “I’d tend it personally all by myself all summer, if you’d only let me have it for my very own.”

Father looked at the small figure in the gold-and-white Cadet uniform, now not as fresh looking as it had appeared that morning at the altar-rails, and said:

“I had been thinking of something in the prayer-book line for you, but your Mother will have tended to that, never fear. All right, Gene, you may have that baby Japanese monk for your very own. Though I don’t know whether Father Brophy will approve of my First Communion gift to you.”

And Gene had raced along the boardwalk, by the tall diving ladder, into the castle-tinned home and come into possession of “Fuji,” the much whiskered young monkey. Some of the older monkeys in the big cage had shown teeth at Gene, ever since the arrival of this consignment, that would live in the public eye when the amusement

park's gates would be thrown open to the thousands of summer visitors, but never this small one. The very night they had come, chattering and miserable and frightened, and had been placed in the basement, near the fire to prevent pneumonia, "Fuji" had crept into Gene's arms, and preferred them to the company of the others.

That afternoon of the First Communion Day, Gene required three calls, each one more imperative than the other, and finally a maternal threat to revoke the paternal gift, before Gene came up for the thorough overhauling necessary to fit him to appear at Our Lady of Solace and under the Bishop's blow become a Christian soldier.

Like a "fade-away" in the movies, this memory of "Fuji" and the Great Day contracted to a disc and then enlarged on another scene. Father Neacy was seeing himself a slim, taller boy in the blue Xavier uniform, sitting with many other slim, blue uniformed boys in the front seats of the school Auditorium.

On the stage was a bearded Bishop: small, sunburnt, and quick; a touch of purple at his throat. His English had an unnative twang to it. With many gestures, he was telling the Xavier boys a true story of his mission field. Gene, sitting in the first row, never forgot his words.

"When my revered predecessors landed at Nagasaki, boys, they did not know if they would find any Christians. It had been over two hundred years since the last successors of Francis Xavier had met painful death, and the pagans

had boasted that they had—what you say?—stamped our religion out of all Japan.

“Our Pères lived modestly at Nagasaki. A small chapel had been opened, and one day there came timidly into our compound one little group. They whispered together and they entered the chapel. They looked around at the statues of Our Lady and Our Lord; the cross over the altar, and the light burning before the tabernacle. Then they consulted together, and one of the old, wrinkled men came up to Père and questioned him: ‘Are you a bonze of the One God? Did the Great Father over the sea send you? Do you take a wife? Do you honor the Mother of God?’

“And when Père had answered that they were priests of the One God, and were here obedient to the Pope, that priests do not marry, and all Catholics honor Our Lady, the old man’s face brightened and he bowed and motioned to the rest of his group, who had been watching intently in the rear of the chapel. When they had come, they all bowed their triple bow, and—What do you think, boys?—they were the descendants of those Japanese who had received The Faith from the hands of Father Francis. Through all the years of persecution, when thousands had suffered crucifixion, the pit, the sword, the slow flames, and there were no priests left in all Japan, they had held fast to the tenets Francis Xavier and his companions had taught them. Fathers had baptized their children and had handed down the formula of an Act of Contrition.”

More this old Japanese missionary told the schoolboys that afternoon, but Gene, riding home

to his seaside home, carried close to his heart the brave tale of these noble Christians of Japan.

Now to Father Neacy came the memory of a hot summer day, and gay thousands crowding and laughing on the walks that surrounded that amusement park lake. Boatload after boatload came shrieking down "The Chutes," the passengers holding fast to kin and property, the Italian boatman standing serenely erect in the stern. By the Chute Lake Walk, above a stand, was stretched an oilcloth sign, "Japanese Ball Game," and over the turkey red counter of this stand Gene was leaning. He was a taller figure now, dressed in white blouse and blue overalls, and he was watching his friend, Tsutsihashi, spiel. The stocky young Japanese, in cool silk was saying to a group of ladies, who seemed to be dubious in their minds, whether this was a form of gambling:

"No, honorable ladies, this Japanese ball game is, what you say, on the table completely. You roll the ball this way," he gave the little wooden ball a practice spin, "and in whatever pocket the little ball rolls himself into, you receive a handsome prize, direct from my home country.

"See, please, the little ball rolls into number 19. See, ladies, number 19 is beautiful, very beautiful vases. Now you try your hand, Miss Lady, and maybe you win one of these hanging chimes or these sets of china. They are all numbered, and so are the little holes the little wooden ball rolls into. You cannot lose, for there is a beautiful prize for every number. You cannot

lose. Just try it once, Miss Lady, and try your luck. You cannot lose."

And so on. Gene knew Tsutsihashi's spiel by heart, and he would use it, word for word, when he relieved the Japanese at supper time.

That hour of supper time, when the crowds in the park would dwindle down, before the coming of the evening crowd, Gene used to dream over that far country, that was pictured on the prizes: the snowy top of Fujiyama, the Sacred Mountain; the tall oblong of the sampans that sailed stately around the vases; the grotesque figures of men and women in kimonas; the big-eyed fish that hung from a red string; the light, gaudy paper fans and their butterfly maidens; the soft straw boxes with sprawling dragons on them; the strange scented boxes that seemed to imprison something of their far-away home. All these Gene would handle and from the pictures try to dream what this fair Japan might be.

Now Father Neacy's thoughts switched from that Coney amusement park and the half grown Gene, musing over the foreign prizes, and he was back again on the old "Pike." It was a sweltering August day, and the St. Louis sun burnt impartially the myriad World Fair visitors, the languid Jefferson Guards, and the gaudy red-and-gold temple front of "Fair Japan."

Within the concession Missouri yielded to Nippon. All around hung endless series of red-bellied lanterns, and there stood at every angle blue-and-white vases, great, long-legged cranes on their sides. Dwarf, gnarled, green furry

trees grew by tiny pebbled walks, and a tiny camel-backed bridge curved gracefully across to a tiny island. Black-coifed maidens, dainty and demure in their pleasant-toned kimonas, served clear tea and frail cakes to those at the tables.

At one of these tables sat Gene, the tall young manager now, and with him was his assistant. As they sipped their tea, young Kotayama was saying:

“After the close of the Fair, Mr. Neacy, when we take these people back to my own country, you will have to come along. This,” his hand swept the concession, “this is tinsel, you should see the real gold. I wish you could see my Nippon in cherry blossom time. Ah! then she is ‘Fair Japan,’ when in my own village by the Inland Sea, the people make procession and the tomtom beats in the Buddhist temple to keep away the demon-wolf, and the people crowd to the more popular Shinto temple.”

“Is there a Catholic church there, Kotayama?” Mr. Neacy was asking.

“In Japan, Mr. Neacy! How *very* ridiculous!”

Then Father Neacy, as though he was still carrying on his chance conversation with Kotayama—“Poor Kotayama,” thought the father, “it’s twenty years since I last heard from him”—was saying: “Yes; Poor Japan in cherry blossom time! I’d like to see it.” He opened his eyes, coming out of his musings and his gaze met the April landscape; the whole hillside was blushing, pink and white, down to the water’s edge. He closed his eyes again.

Then Fair Japan and the Inland Sea receded. For this time Father Neacy was looking at a husky young Senior, kneeling in the quiet Boys' Chapel at Fordham. Kneeling stiffly, for in the afternoon game he had wrenched his knee, carrying the ball over the goal line. As he knelt there before the Lady Altar, his look roamed to one of the stained-glass windows. He had seen it daily at the Boys' Mass, yet never before at sunset hour, when it was not a glass, but a glory.

He knew, of course, the red-bearded figure, with uplifted cross, was his patron and favorite. At the foot of the Saint crouched an Eastern crowd: Indian mother and brown child, Chinese mandarin in flowing reds and greens; but what riveted Gene Neacy's attention was the pagan boy under the green palm.

He was small and almond-eyed and yellow, robed in open-throated purple kimona, but the face of this lad raised pleadingly to the face of Xavier had become, in the strong golden light, the pleading face of little, half-forgotten "Six Dollars."

Forgotten were the thanks due to Our Lady for that football aid; forgotten was Fordham Chapel, for to Gene, looking up also, had come from the glowing figure of Xavier an invitation to come and help satisfy these countless pleading ones of fair, pagan Japan.

Something of the great peace that flooded Gene's soul that memorable evening was with Father Neacy now, as he opened his eyes.

Below him was the great peace of the Inland Sea; the smoke of the *Shinyu Maru* had disap-

peared; the home-coming fishing sampans were being drawn up in yellow rows on the beach. Peace brooded over the evening waters, blue waters, and peace spread across the lighter blue skies. In the nearby chapel the bell began ringing, summoning Father Neacy and his parishioners to Benediction.

With such a sigh as only those may heave who feel complete contentment in their work, Father Eugene Neacy reached once more for his neglected book, that lay open in his lap, and as his eyes fell to the page, once more he reread the verse of Osee that had caused this attack of day dreams:

“I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love.”

A MASS FOR THE MISSIONS

THE silent sacristy showed Father McGrain vested and awaiting the arrival of his server. There was a knocking of boots beyond the door, that sounded on the priest's ears like an impatient pony in a nearby stall; a cold draught swept the sacristy, and Father McGrain had a vista of falling flakes. Before he could expostulate, his belated server had forced the door closed and was shaking stray drifts of December snow from cap and coat.

Leaving the Missal marked at the Mass of St. Francis Xavier, the priest paused a moment and, as was his habit, he recalled his Mass intention.

"I am offering this Holy Sacrifice for Mrs. Frank Carroll's intention. What was it? Yes: she wanted it said for the Missions in honor of St. Francis Xavier."

Then, seeing his red-cheeked server pulling into place his diminutive surplice, Father McGrain nodded, and, as the altar-boy clasped the book, both bowed reverently to the Crucifix and started toward the sanctuary. Beyond the rails knelt the daily handful of a faithful congregation, who braved all wintry weather. Father McGrain, with his server kneeling at his side, began the Mass, and at the Offertory he prayed:

"My truth and my mercy shall be with him, and in my name——"

* * * * *

The sluggish canal, foul and yellow, paralleled the dusty road from Cha La, till in the distance it curved gradually around the base of a blue, uneven-decked pagoda to disappear under a distant camel-backed bridge. The invisible hand of a lazy current drew the water forward. A mechanically poled sampan, with yellow, emaciated children squatting under its straw-thatched cabin, passed and drew near the turn in the canal by the pagoda.

Then along the water floated a ragged bundle. Some twist of the current sent it into the bank by the roadside, and tall grasses caught it. A faint wail came from the bundle. The locusts trilled. The long afternoon declined. The locusts ceased from trilling. It was starlit night over the cold canal. The dark road from Cha La was lonely. And, again, it was another hot day. An occasional sampan poled by upon the canal.

Came a solitary rikisha down the road. In it sat a white-cornetted nun. With half-interest she watched a lean, black, furry chow trotting aimlessly along toward her. She saw the dog raise its nose inquiringly and then run down the bank and sniff at what it found hidden in the tall grasses.

Sister Joannes' years at the Orphanage of the Holy Childhood had accustomed her to such discoveries, and so she spoke shrill Pekinese to her coolie, and he obediently lowered the shafts—the Sister of Charity leaning backward to balance herself—and her eyes followed the gray-pajamaed figure of the coolie, as he waded down the muddy bank and drove off the unwilling chow

dog. He carried a soggy bundle, when he returned to the side of the rikisha.

With merciful fingers Sister Joannes parted the dripping mess of rags and revealed a small, wasted, new-born frame. An inner voice whispered, "Hasten," and Sister Joannes, squeezing the dripping clothes, let fall some saving drops on the tiny brow.

As Sister Joannes concluded the formula, "——and of the Holy Ghost. Amen," there was a faint flutter of wee eyelids.

"I've named her Frances Xavier, in honor of the day," explained Sister Joannes in Pekinese. Then, "Make haste back to the Convent. Savvy?"

Her coolie obediently picked up the shafts. The disappointed chow followed the rikisha for a while. They jogged alongside the sluggish canal, but, before they came abreast of the blue, uneven-decked pagoda, the yellow mite of new-born Christianity lay still forever, and in Sister's heart was great joy that she had been, as she imagined, the instrument yet another "Thief of Paradise" had used to fly Home.

* * * * *

"*Sanctus*," thrice prayed Father McGrain, and, like a musical echo of his prayer, the bells in the server's grasp shook once and again and again.

Then the priest, with poised, folded hands, spoke Holy Church's prayer for the living. "Be mindful, O Lord——"

* * * * *

In a pinkish haze of innumerable cherry-colored

lanterns, the popular grounds of the Temple of the Two Hundred Gods blushed. The temple gongs boomed. Towering cryptomerias grew erect as masts and made the tiny gray-clad pilgrims, who came and went about the trees' giant boles, appear like animated dolls. One little woman with black shining hair, high-coifed, strolled from idol to bronzed idol. Before each she bowed and rose up with a feeling of disquietude. These leering gods had not been satisfying, did not satisfy. From the foot of the hill, beyond the high cross-beamed "torii" of the temple gate, sounded the clear notes of the bells in "the foreign church."

At first, they were just bells, different from the booming temple gongs. Gradually, as the little woman stood listening beneath a pleasant-smelling camphor tree, there came an appeal in each clear tone. She had a consoling fancy the silver-toned bells had begun to call her personally, insistently. The little woman pondered this pleasant fancy, and imperceptibly a vague dread stole into her heart, till it clutched her like evil fingers. She looked about uneasily in the strong sunlight and up into the features of the looming bronze figure that the immense camphor shaded. Something sinister appeared in the countenance of the brooding idol; something that made the woman grow icy cold. She could not explain it in words, she did not need to. She seemed to see in the immovable, leering face of the great idol another face, troubled, proud, and restless as a gray-clouded sea, something essentially evil, treacherous, gloating.

Again, the soft voice in the bells called. Pure, peacefully, fell the tones upon her troubled heart. Its sound was a gentle invitation. The little woman turned away from the idols. She moved down the false temple's grounds. She crossed the shadow of the "torii."

It was strange, and yet strangely familiar, this St. Francis Xavier's Church. On the long oblongs of matting were quiet worshipers. A peaceful quiet pervaded the interior and it soothed her heart like balm. There were calm statues here. One was of a brown-bearded European "bonze," with a cross in his uplifted right hand, at whose feet a Japanese group knelt reverently. And another represented a meek-eyed Lady, who held lovingly in her arms a Babe with pretty eyes.

At the farther end of the church a peaceful light of reddish hue glowed sentinel-like before a little door. Peace seemed to pour through that little door, and the woman bowed low, as she noticed other women of her nation doing.

When she looked up, it was for the first time into the kindly eyes of a statue of "the Christian God." His robes were flowing, and embroidered on His breast was a golden-rayed Heart. His gentle Hands were marked cruelly. His Countenance was not leering, sinister, but holy and exceedingly tender with understanding.

The pagan woman looked long and hungrily, and it was as though her own eyes, held closed through a lifetime, were opening. The security of a calm flooded her soul. She, who had been wearied and burdened, here found refreshment such as she had never experienced before. Grate-

ful words came unbidden to her lips, and she was praying.

The little woman saw the foreign "bonze" of this true temple approaching. She got up and walked confidently toward him. In soft Japanese, the woman said:

"San, I have heard the bells and I have found much peace. I come to be a follower of——" She pointed to the statue of the kindly One, who had the golden-rayed Heart embroidered on His flowing robes. "——a follower of Him."

* * * * *

Low bent Father McGrain and reverently he spoke the most wonderful words in the world. Then, genuflecting, he lifted on high the newly consecrated Host.

* * * * *

Along the milky shingle wandered a certain young man. In loose summer white, his tanned skin glowed with boyish health. He was so obviously in the morning of life. Yet into the western horizon, where sky faded into the evening waters of the glistening expanse, the young man looked. And he saw not the splendor there. His face had fallen into thoughtful lines. Heedlessly, he stooped and gathered a handful of smooth pebbles. Selecting the larger, he curved them one by one out into the cresting surf of the open Pacific. Tiring of this, and as though in resentment of that colorful west, he turned shoreward. As he did, his gaze fell upon a group of slanting palms that grew beyond the beach. A rude hut stood, dilapidated and deserted, at their base.

About was sandy desolation. Yet the celestial light of sunset was warming that abandoned hut beneath the stray palms, and in its poverty it appeared regal.

And there came to the mind of the young man the picture of such another hut, beneath palms, that once stood on the sands of Sancian. It was in the evening of another day and within that humble hut, alone, abandoned, lay one of God's valiant workers. Weak with his labors for God was this mighty one, and close upon eternity's rewards.

Long the young man mused, his eyes fixed on his abandoned hut, and his mind full upon the inspiring thought of that other shelter in the ancient sunset time, and of its dying apostle, who had traveled into strange lands, where strange gods held a people in darkness. He had brought those poor souls light and life and the peace that passeth understanding.

The young man turned away and sat himself facing the west and its drowning sun, that now cast a golden avenue up to his feet. Like many another generous soul, the young man cogitated, and imperceptibly the avenue of light, stretching across the waters, assumed a glorious form. To the mind of the troubled young man, striving to settle aright the age-old question that all must answer when life's responsibilities approach, this avenue of unalloyed gold, reaching toward the same sad Asia under the far horizons, became a desirable highway. Down its molten splendor, there came to the young man the identical cry that ever rings in the ears of the other Xaviers:

“Come, and break to us the bread. Come, oh, come!”

Long the young man listened to that famished appeal, while before him this way of illumination glowed, and the great Glorified Host in the heavens slipped lower, lower, and then it was lighting distant peoples. The western skies were an after glory of blue-fathomed lakes and blazing cloud islands . . . fields, white for the harvest.

The head of this certain young man nodded in surrender. He rose to his full height and, saluting the evening sky, where the glory was unfaded, cried:

“Then it’s Maryknoll, Lord, and Your work in Xavier lands.” And, later, he murmured: “Thanks!”

* * * * *

Father McGrain, his eyes fixed on the Host, was praying for the dead, and when he came to the words, “And sleep in the sleep of peace,” he paused and added mentally:

“Dear Master, on this, his birthday, deign to release one dear to my Apostle’s heart.”

With extended hands, the priest proceeded with his Mass.

* * * * *

It was a land of longing and, withal, a place of peace. Pain predominated, and yet the strong hands of hope upheld each who was detained in that far country. For these souls had each beheld in that dazzling first moment of eternity the Face of Christ. Eagerly had they fled the ravishing vision to seek this land of longing, and there

in patient flame burn away the last atom of earthly dross.

Long in this exile had lain a soul. (His ways in the flesh had been careless and Infinite Mercy had been his measure as he left the domain of days.) Patiently this forgotten one awaited the charitable hour when some brother of the Church Militant would win his release. This soul had seen myriads of his fellow-prisoners, their ransom paid, depart in the wings of their Guardians. Then upon the heat of his atonement fell cool drops—red, Divine—that brought surcease to suffering. Up, up he was lifted. The world-old land of detainment lay like a still, drear valley seen in the noonday from a mighty mountain-top. And this soul, whose debt had been remitted, was gazing forever on Loveliness.

* * * * *

Father McGrain concluded the Last Gospel.

“*Deo gratias!*” responded the little server, and there was in his voice the unconscious suggestion of the lad who has just remembered his breakfast.

Later, the priest was kneeling in the silent sacristy, making his thanksgiving, and Mrs. Frank Carroll, having heard the Mass Father McGrain had just said for her intentions, was plowing through the early December storm, and the little server, arm linked in hers, was shouting:

“Gee! I could eat my birthday cake before breakfast and never miss it. May I? May I, Mom?”

GINGER PUP

NOW all you have to do is listen like the white pup in the ad of "His Master's Voice" and you'll soon hear how this happened. Of course, I learnt the Scout Law as a Tenderfoot, when we used to live in God's Country before Dad was appointed Consul out here. Oh, yes; I knew it better than a parrot, but just like that green-feathered victrola it was sort of the words I memorized. BUT—and this is a 100% BUT—three weeks ago, when I was cooling off at our hill station, the Sixth Law managed to get tattooed on me for ever and keeps. You know how tattooing sticks to your birthday suit worse than good marking ink? Well, that's the way 'A Scout is kind. He is a friend to animals' is chiseled into me. And it is principally all on account of Ginger Pup, who strayed into our school in Bombay one burnt afternoon last April.

For something or other, I had been P. S.—you know, 'penance study'—and our Class Master had just relented and let Noel Flanagan and Ram Chandra and me off. We drifted into the compound and it was too late to get into any of the hockey games. So we stopped under the toddy palms between Divisions and we were figuring how many blooming days of class there would be before the May Holidays, when Rani came trotting up. She's that cute gazelle from Africa, or some place across the Arabian Sea, that we

have had for school mascot since old Dadar got pneumonia and cashed in his monkey checks.

Noel had some gran, and if there is anything Rani hates, it isn't gran, so she started to nose into his pocket like she wanted it pronto. She's an awful beggar and Noel, he's a tease, and she'd have butted him in half a minute, only all at once she backed off and began to pose like she was one of those ponies they have in those Living Statue groups at the Circus. Ever seen 'em?

Noel, who's fat and prudent, got behind me, for he thought she was going to rush him. Then Rani spread her hoofs, just like a sailor stands on a pitching deck, and let her head down like she was specializing on ants.

Ram Chandara, who's a Hindu and ought to know, cried:

"I say, man, Rani sees a snake. Look!"

And then Noel, he said:

"My word, see the blooming pariah pup by the compound wall." And he stretched out his hand toward Nesbit Road.

Over there was a strange cur humbling himself against the wall. He was half grown and that yellow color you see in natives' turbans or some rivers, like the Mississippi, when they're muddy. He looked like he knew he was intruding, yet he wanted to stay, and his tail was going like a buzz saw.

Then Percy Lloyd, who's in VI Standard and the best goal tender in our Second Division, came running near the compound wall after a lost hockey ball and he raised his stick, and made to slog that foreign dog.

Instead of scooting through the gate into the road like any sensible dog would have done, that fool mutt taxied across the compound directly toward where we stood under the toddy palms.

Right then Rani forgot she was a statue, or remembered her descendants were of fighting blood, or something like that. Anyway, that gazelle went into action and tumbled Ram Chandra over in passing.

You know, Rani, she's gentle as a summer day usually, but evidently the color of that pup's coat made her see red, or else she thought one mascot was enough for St. Mary's—mascots are awfully jealous, you know. For just like a tiny crazy bull, with her three inch horns lowered, she charged at that yellow pup.

He was busy dodging boys and hockey sticks and so he didn't have time to look ahead and she rammed him somewhere amidship on his starboard beam.

Then began the fight.

Once, when I had an appointment to meet Dad at the Consulate, I saw a fool monkey and a parrot exchanging compliments upon a balcony in the Jewel Bazaar, and I was late for my appointment with Dad, and once again I saw a mongoose fight a cobra to a finish back of our Barracks at Khandala, but, O Baby! This scrap was movie stuff!

Rani must have roughed the pup's temper considerable, for instead of looking for the emergency exit, he got up and commenced yelping and circling and feinting and the gazelle danced and

wheeled and bucked like a crazy compass needle when you tease it with a magnet, you know.

The boys forgot hockey, naturally, and came running up from all parts of the school compound and the Band Boys, who had a concert for the wounded Tommies next day and needed rehearsal—I'll say they did!—broke up their practice and came piling out of the Band room.

Most yelled: "Rani. Rani. Buck him, girl!" But a few, when they saw what a game dog the pup was, cried: "Well played, Ginger Pup! Carry on, Ginger Pup!"

The argument drifted all over the compound and once the pup chased Rani right into Penance Study room and both tore out again pronto. "P. S." didn't get kept any more that day.

Then Rani turned and Ginger Pup fled down the compound toward where the Infirmary is. The chaps who had had fever or hockey bruises and were convalescing, piled out on the gallery in their pink pajamas. And the Brother Infirmarian tried to chase them back to their cots, but he got so interested in the running fight that he forgot and stayed looking down too.

The two animals just drifted all over that compound and it was like following a football to stay near enough to see the fun. I didn't miss much of it, though I lost a lot of breath, and it is a mighty good thing I don't smoke cigarettes. Noel, he had to sit down before the end.

And racket! Good night! The Prefects tried to stop it and some of the other Fathers who came out, but they only got sweated up and soiled their white habits.

Then it quit—the fight did—sudden as a clap of thunder, for down near the Wash Room, Rani got her horns into that Ginger Pup's side and lifted him. And he got another color to his coat. And she'd have done it again, only "Big Butter" Feeney, who's on the Junior Aga Khan team and our best forward, he got a-hold of Rani and patted her and let her buck him and calmed her down that way.

The boys crowded around and cheered like Britishers do. You know, not a bit all together like in a college yell with us.

About then it was I remembered I was a practical scout, and started looking for the pup. He was lying in a corner, sobbing for breath. You'd think he had finished first in a close Dog Marathon or something. I went up and called him, pleasant like, and he came and crouched by my boots.

I was just going to apply the Six Law, when Percy Lloyd picked up a stone and let the pup have it, and the next second I postponed First Aid and there was another fight and it didn't take me long to stop that English boy. He never learnt boxing from an ex-lightweight champion, and I did 'fore I came out here to Bombay.

After that no other boy decided to slog Ginger Pup, and when the Prefect came up, he said:

"You'd better take a wash-up, Percy, and, yes, get a clean suit from the Clothes Room."

You know, a bleeding nose, when it's bleeding generous like, doesn't go well with our white clothes. And Percy, he didn't know how to guard his face at all.

When Percy Lloyd went off to the Wash Room,

the Prefect, who was looking kindly at the panting pup, said to me:

“Well, this pariah pup is game clean through, Dickie Shaw, and you had better take him over to the Infirmary and get some assistance making him presentable.”

I'm dead sure Father Prefect had seen the stone that Lloyd had slogged at the pup and that's why he didn't say a word about fighting.

So Noel Flanagan and Ram Chandra and I took up Ginger Pup. There was one big rip and some cuts on his side, but the Brother, who doesn't like Rani any too much, put some courtplaster on them and stopped the bleeding and gave Ginger something to drink. You'd think that pup had crossed a desert, and Brother gave him some more, and then made him stop for a while.

When we came out into the compound some of the boys came over to see Ginger Pup and make friends with him, 'cause they like a game one and they were all talking about that roaming fight. Gee! they didn't quit talking of that for a week.

And within that time the pup was a proper favorite of all the boys at St. Mary's, 'cause he was a good mixer and knew how to handle kids, and he even made friends with Rani. For as soon as she saw him around our compound several times, she tolerated him and, by and by, even played with him; racing—and, you know.

But the one particular pal of Ginger Pup was me. He'd have slept at the foot of my cot in the dormitory, only the Prefect had different ideas and Brother Infirmaryman, he let Ginger have a vacant cot in the Infirmary.

Well, after the exams were over in April, the May Holidays actually came and we were to start. Father Rector said I couldn't take the pup with me, as Rani was enough mascot for the hill station.

So the morning of leaving I brought old Ginger to Gopal's hut down back of the Miniature Range. He's the hamal (sweeper) who cleans up, you know. And I tied up Ginger honestly, no granny knot, and he strained and yelped when I went away. I felt awfully sorry to have to go and leave that dog and so did Noel and Ram too.

Marching to Byculla Station, I could hear Ginger's voice and it didn't sound reconciled the least bit. At the station the Poona Mail came and we boys piled into a reserved compartment, and Trevor Casey, who had charge of Rani, started pulling her in, kicking awfully. She doesn't like train travel, so she balked like a little Missouri mule, but Trevor, he said more than his prayers, and in she came, pawing like she had hysterics or something.

Now when Rani's that way and you got shorts on and are in a crowded compartment, you got to watch your bare knees, or she's liable to puncture you accidentally. I was doing that hard, when the train started to move out and then I heard some natives yelling on the platform.

I stuck my head out the door quickly and next second something yellow and racy was alongside our train compartment; a broken rope trailing along the platform.

Those Hindus and Mohammedans must have

been yelling "mad dog" in the vernacular, but I didn't. I opened the compartment door wide and cried, "Ginger Pup! Come in, you old mutt!"

And Ginger Pup, with not much breath left, leapt frantically at the open side door. He slipped and scratched earnestly with his claws to get a purchase, but he would have fallen under the train wheels if I hadn't caught him by half of his ear. And Noel Flanagan, who was handy, hadn't pulled both of us backward into the moving compartment.

I'll say we St. Mary's boys yelled but Ginger Pup, he lay at my feet trying to catch up with his breath, which must have lapped him twice easily.

As soon as The Poona Mail got to Khandala, Noel and Ram and Percy Lloyd and I—for we had made up, and Percy liked Ginger Pup too now—we all made a delegation and waited on Father Rector and he said:

"Well, as long as the dog is actually in the hill station, he'd better stay."

So that was settled satisfactorily and Ginger Pup went to all meals and on picnics and swims and hikes with us every day, and, at night, officially he slept on a vacant cot in the Boys' Barracks. That is, when he wasn't sleeping unofficially with me. For old Ginger liked all the boys and the Prefect, but he liked this here scout better'n any of 'em. And he proved it too!

But let me go on. The last Tuesday of the May Holidays, we four—that's Ginger Pup, Ram Chandra, Noel Flanagan and I—got permission to go on a private picnic to Lohogad. For we

had had a general picnic to that place the Saturday before and Noel had hidden his new hockey stick there in a safe hiding place at tiffin time and then, as usual, forgot all about it till we got back to the Barracks. And he wasn't keen on going down to Bombay without his new stick. I don't blame him a bit.

So Tuesday we got up when it seemed about midnight to get the early train to two or three stations up the line, and then we hiked across country toward the ruins.

You know, or maybe you don't, that Lohogad is an old rock fortress from the days of Shiviji and the Duke of Wellington—only he was plain General Wellesley in those days—and it's on a high lonely hill and you climb up a road criss-crossing the face of the hill. Once within the outer walls, you think you are in the streets of a deserted Jerusalem, only it's more deadly quiet and abandoned like. For nobody lives on Lohogad now only cobras and some gray ape families and the usual horrid scorpions.

By ten, the sun was on the job and it was hot as where neither you nor I intend to end up. We were about several hundred feet up and old Ginger Pup was barking up a palm tree in the top of which sat a gray ape looking down like he was saying "You poor fish!" This only made Ginger madder, but it didn't do him any, any good. Monkeys sure know how to get a pup's goat. So I had to whistle and we all finished the climb to the top of Lohogad.

Climbing steep hills in India is worse'n going

up the Washington Monument when the elevator is out of order, and it was never running the two times I went up it, so I ought to know.

I shouted: "We are going swimming first." But Noel said no, he had come to get his new hockey stick, so we hunted a bit and found it in a kind of dark cave with bats, just where he had hidden it. Then we raced across the walled plateau for the tanks and I beat out Ram and Noel, only Ginger Pup came first.

These tanks on top of Lohogad are cut out of the solid rock—I guess to hold drinking water when an army besieged the fortress in the good, red days—and they have crazy, half crumbled away figures of four-armed and two-headed native gods carved around the sides, and little worn stone steps leading from the water's edge.

But I hadn't come to study idolatry. So I dove in, twisted, and came up floating. It's a funny feeling, swimming on top of a high, deserted hill and only seeing sky; like being in the canvas deck pools on the Pacific liners.

Finally, we got tired and cool and hungry, and after we had eaten down to the bottom of our tiffin baskets and we had stoned a cobra we saw coiled on a rock in the sun, we felt sleepy. So Noel and Ram and I went off to an old, ruined temple by the southern wall. Ginger Pup spotted another ape and he charged away after it.

This temple was just a square stone room with a Hindu stone god—Shivi or Vishnu or one of that kind of idols—in the center. It was shady there, anyway, even if the floor was hard stone,

and the next I knew I was dreaming I was on top of the Woolworth Building in little old distant New York, where I belong by rights, and I could see the Jersey side and the big electric clock and piers and ferry boats and a liner in midstream and tugs working around her like ants bringing home a worm.

Then something snuggled against my legs and, half awake, I knew it was Ginger Pup and he had gotten tired of daring that ape to come down out of the palm tree and say it man to man.

I reached out my foot and kicked him friendly like and his tail thumped some Morse Code on the stone floor of that Hindu temple in answer and I was asleep again.

Then, maybe an hour or a week later—I don't know, as I had left my wrist watch back in barracks 'cause it needed fixing—I half awoke and an awful feeling seemed to come over me.

I don't know just how to describe it. You know how in bed at night, you sometimes seem to feel your Guardian Angel hovering by, and you feel safe and comfy, like the blanket was his wing. That way. Well, this feeling was entirely different from that. I don't mean my Guardian Angel didn't feel on the job, but just at that moment he didn't feel so near, though he really was all the time.

I wasn't awake and I wasn't asleep, but I knew I was in India and not America. I opened my eyes and I could see that stone idol in the shady light of the pagan temple—its four hands and evil jeweled face, partly crumbled away, and a string

of withered yellow flowers wreathed around its neck.

Then there was a scraping and around the base of that idol poured something dark and swayey. It reared and I was wide awake and looking straight at the greenish scales and hooded head of the largest cobra I ever, ever saw. Believe me, I don't ever want to see any bigger, or smaller for that matter, ever again.

That poison snake was rising and swaying like a rubber candlestick almost over me and I knew enough to imitate stone and S. O. S. Heaven.

Seconds take hours to pass sometimes, and I must have grown an inch, when Ginger Pup, curled up into my feet, stirred.

Then he did the bravest act a dog ever did. He could have run away, but he sprang over my stomach directly at that deadly head.

He wasn't quick enough, for lightning is a local alongside the express speed of a striking cobra. Both fell on my breast and the snake drew back and struck that pup again. I let out a yell.

Then the cobra disappeared around the base of the Hindu god and Ginger after it. Noel and Ram Chandra were yelling too, and I felt very, very sick and that weak I couldn't have wrestled with a sunbeam.

I must have fainted, for some time later my face was all drippy. When I was able to register impressions I was resting in Noel's lap and he was looking mournfully at his new hockey stick which was split in two. There lay the cobra in the sunlight of the doorway with its back broken.

Then I remembered and I whistled for Ginger Pup. But Noel held me and Ram gave me a pull at the water bottle and tried to make me rest. I wanted Ginger Pup and I struggled to my feet.

I found the pup on the other side of the little temple. He was all swelling up.

When I saw him I cried and I didn't care who saw me, 'cause my dog could have run away and left me to that awful cobra.

But that isn't all. Wait till I tell you the better part. When I was able to hike, we wrapped poor Ginger Pup in my khaki coat and took turns toting him down the steep hill path from Fort Lohogad, and in a little village on the plain we hired a bullock cart from the headman and came back to Khandala.

Ginger Pup was laid out in a box lined with a red dormitory blanket in the long corridor outside the Boys' Barracks.

The Fathers and the boys all came to see him and there wasn't much else talked of in our compound. Though that morning the First Division team had played the wounded Tommies at the Soldiers' Barracks up the road and beaten them two nil.

Now I'll say this for Percy Lloyd. He's the right sort and the idea was all his. He didn't say a word to me, but he went to Father Rector and he said it was an excellent idea and Ginger Pup deserved the honor.

Then young Lloyd told me.

You never saw a dog funeral with full military honors, did you? Well, I did once, and I am glad I was chief mourner.

For in the cool of the evening, the Band Boys got out their instruments and lined up. First came the Band, playing "Tipperary" slowly and it sounded just grand and solemn. Then Trevor Casey led Rani on a chain, for we thought she'd like to attend Ginger's funeral, and she was the only lady who did, all the rest were men.

Noel and Ram carried the box, all nicely wrapped in that red blanket, for the Prefect said we could bury it with Ginger Pup. And the Guard of Honor, eight boys in uniform with guns reversed, marched either side and the other sixty boys trailed behind. A lot of the Third Division kiddies were sniffing openly.

Percy, at the last moment, got another idea and he wanted to toll the chapel bell, but Father Rector said there was no need as all would be marching.

The funeral wound around the compound and below the Boys' Barracks, just at the edge of The Ravine, where the jungle starts, the little grave was dug.

The Guard fired the last volley and Noel and Ram and I filled in the hole, and we all came away.

Only later, Noel and I got a board and we cut into it—it took a whole afternoon with our scout knives—this sign. And if you ever come up to Khandala in the Western Ghats, you can see it plainly, for it is over his grave and it reads:

HERE LIES
GINGER PUP.
A PUKKA HERO.

But I don't need any sign to remember him, and likewise I got chiseled on my brain "A Scout is kind. He is a friend to animals," 'cause I've learnt for life, the Sixth Law Pays.

THE TILTED CROSS

CAPTAIN LESLIE ALMOND had been thinking for a long, long time. Ever since the Eurasian Sister had brought him a plate of ice cream. She had given him a few more babyhood reminiscences of her son Cyril—reminiscences that the Captain Sahib could repeat from oft-heard repetitions, and he had heaved a “healthy” sigh, after her white and red-crossed person had disappeared down the long corridor.

He looked disgustedly at the untouched plate lying on the little wicker table in the midst of a few gaudily-covered novels, his tobacco-tin, and his writing materials. Then his eyes, like caged Bengali tigers, restlessly turned, sweeping the high-ceilinged room, and finally focused on the empty khaki sleeve that was pinned up, and at the blanket that terminated so unnaturally below his knees. Then his glance fell to the narrow deep red bar of ribbon sewed to his left breast, and he shook his head very slowly.

Both legs and an arm had that Cross cost him—true, he had crossed the Tigris, started the bridgehead, and Kut had fallen the next day—but most of life, the thirties and the forties and on, stretched endlessly, grayly, down to the end of time.

This awakened vista of that long, long way of helplessness wrung from the Captain again:

“Ah, God, it’s too much to expect it! Why, forty dependent, useless, chaired years! No, no, no, I can’t! I won’t! Ah, if there was only something I could do!” And again in a caged agony his eyes roamed from prison wall to prison wall.

The tropical twilight lit up his silent room—it had been part of a gold and pink suite that traveling Maharajahs had engaged before the great Taj Mahal Hotel had flown the Red Cross flag from its room.

Through the glowing western windows the imprisoned Captain Sahib caught the feathery tops of palms, where the blue crows fought forever with their ancient and tiny enemies, the green sharp-billed parrots. And beyond were the minarets of a mosque and the towers and domes of stately Bombay.

But it was the long southern windows that the Captain faced, as they gave him a glimpse of that moving life for which all that was left of him craved. The cloudless blue above the blue and white bay, and the green jungle-clad hills on the farther shore, and, in between, the gleaming-sailed dhows of the fisherfolk and the craft that slipped by—black merchantmen, grim gray cruisers, the nervous destroyers, and the ceaseless arrival from Mesopotamia of the great ships with the green and white stripes and the big, painted red crosses that the Captain could see even at this distance. These ships always made the Captain sadder, for he knew they carried, in the low, white salons, other remnants of men.

The twilight had gone as quickly as it had come—our twilights do in Asia—leaving lengthening

shadows, twinkling lights on the black-waved bay, the regular sweep across the skies of the sleepless searchlight beams, and the wakeful warm darkness.

“Another hot night!” thought the Captain aloud. “Another hot night, the prelude to another hot day!”

Somewhere in the bazaar nearby a Hindu harmonium began to swell and fall. Up over the window-sill came the strain. The Captain’s face fell into hard lines.

Why, oh why, would they play that air of all airs! The heaving harmonium carried it—“It’s a long, long way to—”

“I say, man, quit that Requiem,” murmured Captain Almond angrily.

“—but my heart’s right there.” And the shrill voices of “chhokras”—native boys—started the chorus once more.

Again they came, the faces of those gone, and, seeing nothing but the oblong that led into the night, the Captain in the chair saw them all once more. How gayly they had sung that song in the early days, as they had tramped, tramped down to the embarkment at Apollo Bunder, and the Captain had tramped and sang the lines with them too.

Captain Almond, back once more in the days before ’14, found himself repeating the old nicknames. “Diwana” Mourao and “Hindu God”—they never came back from desolate German East Africa. Little “Dickie” Race and Hoy—“Hobdledenhoy”—both lie in the abandoned hills of Gallipoli. “Bull” McGill and “China” Martin

gave their all—one on the Somme and the other that crashing May day off Jutland.

Then the ten that the desert sands of Mesopotamia claimed! Ever so softly in the still room, the Captain, as in a litany, went over those school-fellow names—for they had all been together through the jolly years at St. Mary's. "Blinkers," "Punch," "Patsy," and his brother "Polly," "Butter" and "Big Butter," "Maidie" and "Jumbo," and the two "Gingers."

"And I am the only one that Hun or Turkish lead has cruelly spared!" said Captain Almond, "Spared! Has it? I, the useless remnant, denied the sweet grave! They did their bit for the Empire, and I—I, this blooming burden!" And again his anguished soul forced out the cry: "Ah, God, if there was only something, some little thing, that I could do!" The Captain Sahib stopped hopelessly.

That Hindu harmonium was still wailing that tabooed air, and, as though to escape it, the Remnant looked up and out into the tropical, star-spangled heavens. All the glorious stars were out; the least, gleaming gems, such as only Rajahs could afford to wear in their turbans, but blazing there low in the south, perfectly framed in the window, were the crown jewels of the Southern Cross.

Long the weary Captain looked up into the heart of the Mark of Salvation, and gradually a new meaning was read to him in that constellation. A message, which gave flight to the black hopelessness that had been engulfing him, and brought, as refreshing as the bay breeze that cools the hot

roads of Bombay at evening, the sense of blessed usefulness.

For tonight Captain Almond saw beyond. Why, this Starry Cross tilted slightly to one side, was the Emblem of those neglected chums' graves in East Africa, in torn France, in sweltering Mesopotamia!

How often in the field, as they had fought up the banks of the yellow, rapid Tigris, had Captain Almond seen such a tilted cross at the base of a date-palm. And he had helped to erect such a rude crossed board himself over poor old "Ginger" Troy's grave! Then he and the khaki thousands had trenched farther up the blazing river, and who remembered those whose shattered bodies lay under such tilted crosses—Southern Crosses—but whose needy souls lay beyond?

With his gaze still fixed on that inspiring Sign that had given him tonight new life, a new hope, something to do, the useful Remnant, that was Captain Leslie Almond, V. C., rested more contented in the hot, tiresome pillows.

Then taking pains to make his intention clear—for all those chums who now waited patiently in the Trenches Beyond—the Captain Sahib reached with his remaining hand, and, slipping the rosary from his neck, began gratefully to say his *Aves*.

THE BISHOP'S STIPEND

IT WAS a warm evening and the slight figures under the flooding electrics cast sharp, darting shadows over the compound. Blacker in the black background loomed the still fringe of toddy palms, the huge bulk of the darkened church, and the compound side of St. Mary's School. Skyward, scattered in the soft velvet of the Indian night, were the great, pleasant stars, and, like a benediction, in the south blazed the greater stars of the Southern Cross.

Something of the peace of this scene was in the priest's heart as he stepped out of the long gallery into the compound's dust. Simultaneously the cry went up:

"Salaam, Father Sahib. Please, Father Sahib, we've been waiting."

And certain familiar figures closed in on the stocky priest to escort him to the stone seat at the base of the tall, slanty palm. Once he was seated gingerly—for white habits and dusty stones are not meant to meet—the youngsters squatted Buddha-like about him, their bare knees almost touching the ground, and their white suits intensifying the brownness of their skin.

Carefully Father McGlinchey searched for a match and, as he did so, an envelope fell out of his habit pocket. Instantly there was a polite scramble, but Wilfrid de Noronha, the wistful-featured

Cawnpore chap, was the quickest and handed it back with a smiling:

“Please, sir, and may I have the foreign stamps?”

The blue and purple American stamps, that had carried this letter the long 15,000-mile way, were carefully removed, and the incident gave the Padre Sahib a hint.

“Marcel-baba,” said Father McGlinchey, addressing all through the frail French-Mauritian boy, directly before him, “that letter from ‘God’s Country’ brought me bad news and good news.”

“Oh! sir, I’m sorry. I mean, I’m jolly glad.”

But Marcel Coulon’s confusion was lost in the general:

“Keep quiet, you! How, sir? Please, Father Sahib, tell us.”

In the hush that clamped down on the circle, the shouts of other lads, playing “*Gilli Dandu*” in the dust under the electrics, came shrill and distinct:

“Because, when this came in this evening’s post, I learned that a good Bishop had, as you babas say, gone west. Only, I know, he went higher than west, and one of the first things he ‘did, when he arrived at, say, High West, was to thank a great big little American baba, about the size of tiny Visitatio here.”

Visitatio Viegas, Goan and brown-eyed, blushed under the universal gaze, and tried to smile.

“There is a ‘chota cannie,’ but—”

Father McGlinchey hesitated tantalizingly, and as he expected, the anxious chorus broke out:

“Please, Padre Sahib, the ‘chota cannie!’ The short story! What was it?”

“Well, once upon a time.” That start rightly contracted this circle. “Once upon a time, when I was a younger priest than I am now, I was stationed at St. Francis Xavier’s—”

“I’ve been there. On Park Street, Calcutta. One day, my servant—” broke in Rozarinho Espenance, but his further observation was stopped by “a solid blow” from indignant neighbors, and Father McGlinchey continued:

“No; not over Calcutta-side, but in New York was this Xavier’s. It’s a big arching church,” (the priest sought for terms familiar to this Bombay audience), “cramped down in a gloomy road of the Kalbadevi section of the city, right in the middle of the Clothes Bazaar, and it required many, many altar boys to serve all the Masses.

“Among these Mass-servers was a most willing one. He was, as I said, about as high as this Top o’ my Thumb,” Father nodded at Visitatio, “and he knew his Mass Latin even better.”

“Bull’s eye, Padre Sahib,” commented Naomi Angoorley, a Bagdadi listener.

“One morning, just toward the end of my Mass, Louie-baba serving, I turned for the last blessing and I noticed Louie making a very wobbly Sign of the Cross. The next instant he toppled over. Somewhat like Naomi-baba here did last route march.”

The Bagdadi boy’s late weakness was common compound talk. Visitatio brightened visibly.

“An altar boy hurried over from a side altar and Louie was helped away. Well, naturally, I hurried through the Last Gospel, said the prayers at the foot of the altar, prayer and responses, all

by myself. In the sacristy I found a very chalky-looking lad crumpled up in a chair, and he was not refusing the cup of hot coffee that the kindly Brother Sacristan had sent for.

“Louie didn’t show up next morning, nor any other morning that week, and I thought it was time for me to investigate. So one afternoon I put on my ‘cocoanut topee,’ as you call it, though in Yankeeeland we call that kind of a hat a ‘derby,’ and climbed the four flights of rather rickety stairs to the home of Louie.

“Sure enough, he was lying listlessly in bed, but his interest was aroused when his mother called: ‘Louie dear, see whom Our Lord sent to see you!’

“That afternoon I learned more of Louie than I had ever suspected. He was in the—well, you would rate it—the Third Standard, and he had been in the Class of Preparation for First Communion. Back in the days of Louie, chota babas were sometimes rather bara babas (big boys) before they received Our Lord for the first time. Today, thank God, all that is changed and a boy of Louie’s nine years, who has not made his First Holy Communion is a rather neglected kiddie.

“Now the Doctor Sahib who was attending him, had found something radically wrong within Louie, and his verdict was that Louie would have to spend a long time in bed. And that, to Louie’s eyes, meant no First Communion.

“I didn’t say anything, but on my future visits to that home I questioned Louie quietly and I was more than surprised to learn how well prepared Louie was for His Master’s coming. And the result was that the morning the First Communicants

came up to the altar-rails in vast St. Francis Xavier's, I carried Our Lord to Louie, and I doubt if any of the white-clad children were happier than this sick-a-bed lad."

Here the caged lion, over in the neighboring Aga Khan compound, roared, and out of the darkness came, trotting, "Rani," the school mascot and pet. She intruded her gazelle self into the midst of the circle, trembling violently, and "Bandar" Mourao, peeling a plantain, gave her the skins. Father McGlinchey petted her quietly as he resumed:

"A whole year passed and Louie would receive Holy Communion as often as I was able to bring It to him, and the time came around when the others in Louie's class were to be confirmed. Now Louie wanted to receive that Soldier Sacrament the worst way. Possibly the long, long days lying there, for Louie did not get any better, made my former little altar-boy feel the need of strength. Several times he shared his longing with me and I instructed him as well as my limited time allowed, but I was not a Bishop, and Bishops, even in New York City, are about as common as—" Father McGlinchey swept the tropical setting for a comparison—"as Yankee babas in Bombay. So there seemed no possible way in which Louie-baba could be confirmed.

"But little boys who love Our Lord very much, have ways of moving mountains, and Louie was such a one. If anything, his year of suffering had shrunken Louie, so that at this time he looked smaller than he used to in the small red cassock and shrimpy surplice of an altar-boy.

“At St. Francis Xavier’s College, a new Boys’ Chapel had been fitted up, and, as you do or do not know, it is necessary for the Bishop to consecrate or bless a new chapel.

“Now comes the Bishop into this chota cannie. He was one of those ocean-hearted men, always on the alert to help others. He promised to come over to St. Francis Xavier’s and consecrate the new chapel, and this morning in May he did. After the ceremonies, the Bishop and his Secretary and Father Rector were having their chota hazri in the college refectory. I had said a Funeral Mass and came for my own breakfast, and lo, I found myself sitting across from His Lordship.

“The Bishop was telling his plans for doing good; only, in his humility, he would never think of calling them by that name. He told us of the large classes of Confirmation he had that month, and he added: ‘I find by my record that I have confirmed 44,000 within the last five years.’

“Now, just at this moment—see how Our Lord almost visibly uses his poor instruments sometimes—there came to my mind the picture of wasted Louie, lying on his tiresome little cot, and his one longing to receive this Sacrament of strength. And almost before I knew it, I was leaning across the table and saying: ‘Bishop, I can make your record 44,001 very easily.’

“Then out came the story, and in a few moments I saw that I had the Bishop’s whole attention. His eye lightened in that kindly way, those who knew him loved to observe, and he said: ‘You

say you think this Louie is sufficiently prepared to receive Confirmation?’

“I offered to bet. Then said the Bishop: ‘Father, after breakfast, you go and tell this Louie that I and my Secretary will be at his home within the half hour.’

“You babas can rest assured that it did not take me long to finish and excuse myself. I dropped into the sacristy and gathered up some candles, a surplice and cassock—the smallest that I could see—and then I hastened to the tenement where Louie lived.

“As luck would have it, Louie’s father was home, and when he and Louie’s mother heard what visitors would come shortly, you should have seen how juldi they got into action. But I thought Louie would faint and spoil everything, when he learned that a pukka Bishop was coming to him.

“I left Louie’s mother slipping Louie into his altar garments and then I returned to hold my Bishop to his promise.

“I found him vesting in his full robes, same as he had used to consecrate the chapel, and he had made his Secretary don a surplice and stole, for he said: ‘Such a little lover of the Lord deserves to be confirmed with all the ceremony that I am capable of.’

“Sahibs passing on Sixteenth Street must have received a shock that morning, seeing a Bishop in robes coming down the steps of the college, but their surprise was faint compared to the sensation caused in Louie’s neighborhood, when the humble Bishop’s gharri, driven by the Bishop’s lordly

gharriwallah, drove up and stopped before the tenement.

“Up the four flights of stairs climbed the Bara Padre Sahib, and up the four flights of stairs climbed his Secretary, and I don't think either were used to such exercise. But both felt paid in full when they saw the happy, happy face of Louie-lad, as alight as the candles flickering on the small table.

“He was lying there, a little red and white altar baba. Somehow the sight made me think of a marble Boy Crusader, lying stately in some Old World Cathedral, like that picture in your English History.”

“I know. It's on page 218.”

But “Bachchha” Fernandes was silenced by a savage, “I'll knock you spinning over.”

“Then the Bishop sat by the side of the bed, holding his golden crook, and he asked Louie a few questions. They seemed simple, but they were searching and I doubt if any of Louie's former schoolmates, preparing at that time to receive the same Sacrament, could have given the answers that Louie gave so readily.

“Finally, the good Bishop turned to me and he said: ‘Father, this child's knowledge is more than book, and I wish all children were as well prepared as your Louie seems. I mean *is*.’

“Then the Bishop stood up in his purple and white and gold and his Secretary handed him his ritual and he began to administer the Sacrament that makes us Soldiers of the Lord. And when he came to the part where he gives the candidate

a blow, I think His Lordship put more than the customary light tap into that blow.

“When the beautiful ceremony was all finished, the Bishop, looking down on the pale cheeks, said: ‘I believe that I am entitled to a stipend, and I am going to get it privately from Louie.’ So all of us went into the other room, and I was the last to leave and as I was closing the door I looked back and saw His Lordship sitting by the bedside and he was holding Louie’s hand and asking him something very earnestly.

“Then the Bishop came out, and with that charm of his by which he made all feel at home in his presence, he jokingly refused another breakfast. When I had seen His Lordship off for St. Stephen’s, his own church, I reclinced those long flights of stairs and I needn’t tell you that I found a very happy kiddie, who would not tell me a word of what he called ‘the Bishop’s secret.’ But I made a shrewd guess, for I knew the Bishop’s fondness for asking the prayers of innocent children, and I knew that he knew that children get what they want from the Throne.

“Well, that was the end of May, when Louie became a soldier, and by the end of July it was evident to all, even Louie’s mother, that Louie was going to make a long, long journey in the very near future.”

“Where to?” asked Mudeliar Rao, but he was answered with a whispered, “Hold your blooming tongue, you Hindu hyena.” And Father McGlinchey continued:

“Several times I crossed the trail of our Bishop and he would always ask smilingly for his ‘sick

soldier,' and send through me this message, 'Tell Louie to keep on. It hasn't come yet.'

"When I would repeat the Bishop's message Louie would smile that wan smile of his and say nothing.

"On the afternoon of Our Lady's Assumption, I was hastily summoned back with the Holy Oils. I had brought Holy Communion that morning. I found Louie sinking rapidly, and he went Home with eyes agleam. I'd give a lot to glimpse what Louie saw."

Father McGlinchey stopped, then he said wistfully:

"I hope all you babas win to such a happy summons."

"Is that all?" asked Marcel, breaking the little silence that held the whiteclad group.

"No; not quite," said Father McGlinchey. "That evening I was called to the telephone, and instantly recognized the Bishop's voice. He said: 'Father, I want you to tell our "sick soldier" that I received that request I asked him to pray for. I don't mind telling you now I needed \$10,000—that's about Rs. 30,000—for a church debt, and this very afternoon from a most unexpected source came a check for \$25,000.'

"Then I spoke: 'Bishop Cusack, may I ask when that check came to you?'

" 'Shortly after four. Why?'

"Because our little Louie died at four this afternoon."

"Neither the Bishop nor I said much more over that phone. But when Louie lay in St. Francis Xavier's—such a tiny white box for such a great

big church!—a pukka Bishop sat in the sanctuary, and a purple-and-white-and-gold Bishop gave the last blessing. And does any baba here have any doubt as to the identity of that Bishop? Marcel? Rozarinho? Mudeliar? Bandar? Visitatio? Wilfrid-baba?"

Only negative shakes greeted Father McGlinchey's foolish question.

Then the Prefect's bell rang, summoning the circle to bed, and the priest fed the butt of his cigar to begging "Rani." She trotted at his side, chewing contentedly, while Father McGlinchey paced along with his pleasant thoughts.

And far above him, kept vigil the pleasant stars that God has set to mark the way to that Home, where lately a Bishop thanked a Baba.

THE LOST DOOR

NOW legends are made of dreams and dreams are unreliable things. This is an unreliable thing my Christian boatman told me while we lay becalmed on the sunny Marmora. Across the bluest of waves the gray gates and crumbling sea walls of old Constantinople stood in view, and we could make out, amid the domes and minarets of Mohammedanism, the great ball of hoary Santa Sophia, centuries ago a basilica, wherein The Word was duly honored, but today, and a sad myriad of yesterdays, a mosque, where fezzed Turks face Mecca and adore, as their Prophet mistaught them.

* * * * *

It was the last Christian day of Constantinople, and the Turks were within the smoking gates. The Byzantine women and children—most of them not to know in this world that they were widows and orphans—had fled from all quarters of the falling city to the vast basilica; for human protection was failing them. They overflowed the ground floor and the arcades and the pillared galleries, and their frightened eyes were turned toward the High Altar, where old Father Isidore bent and prayed. Little Michael, kneeling at the priest's feet, answered the prayers of the Mass.

Never had Michael known such a night and such a day. In the midnight, when Greek fire blazed,

he had seen his father and his strong brother, Julian, fall by dart and javelin on the walls, and through crazed bazaars and lanes he had wormed his way back to the stricken home and with his mother and fair Helen had watched from the flat roof the ever-reddening northern horizon, the skyline over the Golden Horn, where the vessels of Mohammed were winning him his title of "The Conqueror." Then the mother had said:

"Children, we shall die in Santa Sophia."

It took them hours to force their way into the old familiar church. His mother and Helen had become separated and little Michael had found himself near the gates of bronze which opened into the sacristy. Within the sacristy was desolation and still abandonment, but in a far corner Michael saw old Father Isidore, whose Mass he had served so often. Old Father Isidore prayed alone, for the vigorous priests were with the remnants of the men.

Then a trembling, wounded slave brought word that Father Constantine and Father Ambrose had been killed, and it was said even the Emperor lay dead, and there was fighting in this very quarter of the city. Father Isidore had calmly nodded, and he had said:

"Little Michael, be brave now and assist me."

Michael had helped him vest, and the priest and acolyte had passed out into the gold and marble glory of the sanctuary where so often the Patriarch and the Emperor had sat in glittering state. The last Mass in Santa Sophia had begun.

But this Mass was unlike any other Michael had ever seen. It was unlike any ever said through-

out a thousand years in Santa Sophia. It was like last night on the walls, and the terror in the bazaars. Michael looked fearfully behind him, and he saw no men. Bright-robed women and brighter children were not only in their reserved galleries, back of the green and reddish rows of marble pillars, but spread like an angry sea across the nave, where only the men might worship. Below the gilded saints, under the cedar and ivory doors, about the golden columns, before and behind and around the base of every marble pillar crouched these unfortunate intercessors. More wails than prayers went up.

Then Michael, with fear tugging at his heart (for Michael was only thirteen), looked up to where under the immense dome the four great mosaic archangels looked serenely down. His eyes sought and rested on his patron. The cry came unbidden:

“My archangel, defend me in battle!”

Little Michael felt stronger on the instant, as though his winged protector hovered nearer, and in his very nearness was something of the calmness of eternity.

Then when the priest spoke the words over bread and wine and brought the Lord down for the last time, there came wild mortal screams from all the tall, splendid doorways, and Mohammedan horsemen with reddened scimitars rode out of the sunlight into that last congregation; into and over the women and children. Reverence had held these Christians from a too near approach to the High Altar up to this time, but now with shrieks to God they broke the semicircle and came press-

ing forward, and the warning cry went up from little Michael:

“Father Isidore, fly and save Our Lord from the infidels!”

He heard a voice that he recognized as his mother’s repeat the cry:

“Flee, Father Isidore! The Turks are slaying all. At least save God from their impious hands!”

The old priest clutched the chalice over which he had just spoken the consecrating words, and the hesitating paralysis of age in the presence of horror seized him. A bearded Turk, splendid in gleaming armor of supreme rank, rode a white horse out of the very sacristy. Little Michael was the first to notice the horseman in the silver gilt doorway and he tugged at the priest’s alb.

“This way, Father Isidore. The door into the gallery. Come, oh, come with God at once!”

The mounted Moslem sighted the vested priest and the boy, and he spurred his horse forward. A woman, pushing her daughter before her under the horse’s hoofs, clutched at the reins, crying:

“Michael, Helen and I bar his way. Fly with the Lord.”

In an agonized flash, the boy saw his mother and fair Helen. But he obeyed her last command and swiftly piloted the dazed priest down the altar steps and toward the rich door of soft blue lapis lazuli and chastened gold that led to the gallery and safety. The bearded Mussulman, checked momentarily by the old hands that yet gripped the jeweled reins of his charger, hacked down the dead barrier and urged his horse after priest and boy. More Christians attempted to bar his

way across that broad sanctuary, so their dear Lord might reach the door of blue and gold. Father Isidore stumbled, recovered himself with Michael's aid and tottered forward. His eighty years were telling.

"Within the door! Within the door is safety! Hasten!" cried Michael.

"I can go no faster. I—I—"

"You must save the Lord."

Father Isidore stopped and a great sob was in his voice:

"Where is the consecrated Host?" He held the chalice and empty paten. "I've lost Him."

Michael turned his back on the door to safety. He saw the bearded Turk and the red legs of his horse about to tower over them. And there on the stone floor lay the Host that had been dropped. His young limbs demanded flight. Then above the mounted Turk, above the pillared gallery, Michael caught sight of the great mosaic of his winged archangel, and he cried:

"O Michael, you defended God once, and no less shall I."

With a determined push he helped Father Isidore through the door. Then he dove under the crimsoned fetlocks. His small hand closed over the large white Host, and in an instant he had given His Lord protection, and himself Viaticum.

The startled charger reared violently and his cruel hoofs came down, grew brighter yet, and he stumbled. His horseman checked him mightily and again the frightened beast reared and slipped on the floor. His splendid rider threw his hand against a ribbed marble pillar. When his horse

steadied, he looked ahead to cut down the priest, but Father Isidore had disappeared. Where the fair blue lapis lazuli and chased gold door had been a moment before, now appeared a continuous marble wall. On it, in shining mosaics, a boy archangel, inlaid gold and inlaid blue, stood guard.

Other Turks rode clattering across the sanctuary, and they quickly saluted the bearded horseman.

“Conqueror, we feared for thy safety,” they said.

Mohammed II, still dazedly looking for his lost prey, half returned their salute with a sweep of his scimitar.

“By Allah and his Prophet, the very door he darkened has vanished. I would have cut him down but for that Byzantine boy.” And the Sultan pointed to the small still form staining the sanctuary floor. “He, like these dead dogs, threw himself under Al Borak’s very hoofs and near unhorsed me!”

Thus Mohammed, the Conqueror, and his followers came into grim possession of Santa Sophia; but not of its Lord.

* * * * *

Such was the legend my Christian boatman told me, as we lay becalmed on the sunny Marmora and could make out, amid the domes and minarets of a fading Mohammedanism, the great ball of hoary Santa Sophia, the famed sanctuary that was taken two score of years before our New World rose upon Columbus’ vision. When the breeze sprang up we sailed around the still walls of old

Byzantium and into the Golden Horn, and later I stood under the great dome.

My fezzed guide pointed out the supposed red imprint of Mohammed's hand on the ribbed marble pillar, and he mentioned the lost door, asserting it was an historical fact that Santa Sophia, the basilica, possessed one hundred and one doors, and Santa Sophia, the mosque, reveals an even hundred.

Then he added the prophetic touch to the legend the boatman had told me. He told me of an old prophecy that has a new significance to-day when Allied masters hold Constantinople. It is this. A day will surely come, when the cross will replace the crescent, and at the close of the first new Mass in the restored basilica of Santa Sophia that lost door will appear and open, and out will step old Father Isidore, still guarding in his withered hand the chalice and its Precious Blood. He will with triumphant step cross the broad sanctuary and ascend the High Altar and there finish his long halted Mass. At the very end, his priestly duty done, he will die.

So said my fezzed guide. But I, looking aloft to where the four great mosaic archangels still stand guard under the vast high dome, preferred to think otherwise. Rather, old Father Isidore will return again gloriously into those realms where all these happy, happy centuries a valiant little St. Michael has reigned amid the splendor-winged choirs of the Great Defenders of the honor of the Lord.

THE END

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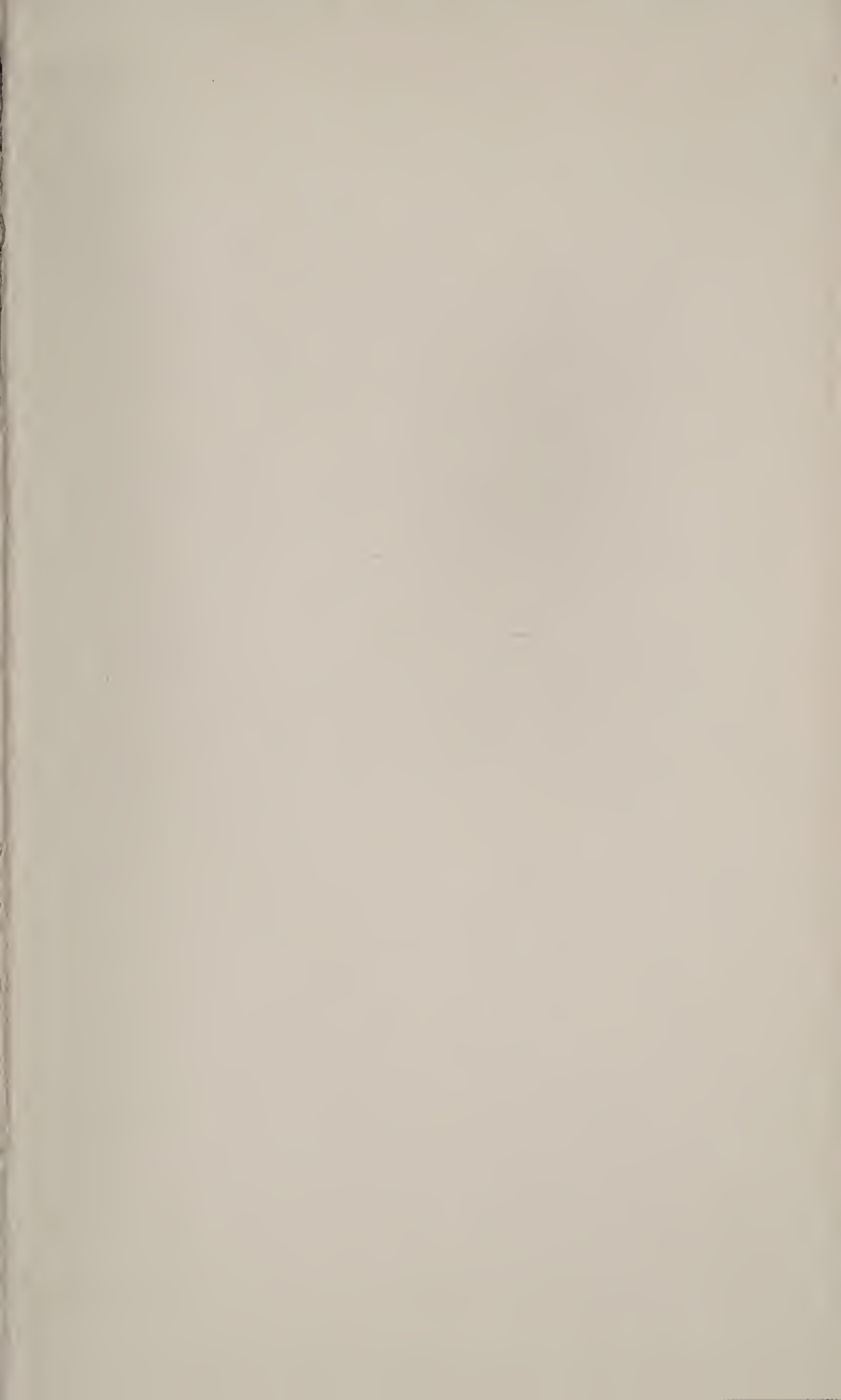
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